■ NEWS / A2

Gov't, MILF start new round of talks in KL

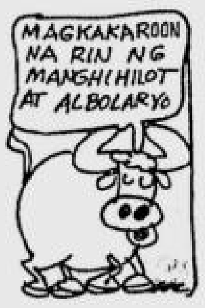
■ BUSINESS / B6

Peso hits 3-year high of 51.605 against dollar

Do you have a story to tell about Edsa I? The INQUIRER is looking for those untold stories (photos, too) that contributed, no matter how small, to the first People Power in 1986 that so stunned the world and inspired and emboldened people in chains everywhere to break free. The contributions that will be selected by the editors will be used for the INQUIRER's special celebration of the 20th anniversary of Edsa I. **Send your contribution, with your address and contact number, not later than Feb. 15 to fdelmundo@inquirer.com.ph**

email: feedback@inquirer.com.ph
PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS
Tuesday, February 7, 2006 ★★ 4 sections / Vol. 21 / No. 61 P18 website: www.inq7.net

Medical tourism plan offers Filipino massage


MAGKAKAROON NA RIN NG MANGHIHILOT AT ALBOLARYO

By Christian V. Esguerra

IN THE FUTURE, THE place to go for a soothing massage will be the hospital nearest you.

The government is set to make spas, health and wellness centers a regular

MEDICAL/ A6

Exec tells CBCP: Don't demonize mine industry

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

WHILE MINING EXECUTIVES ARE SEEKING A DIAlogue with Catholic bishops, an official of the Philippine Mines Safety and Environment Association is attacking the bishops, describing their move to demonize the mining industry as a throwback to the Spanish colonial era when the friars held sway over the fate of the *indios* (natives).

EXEC.TELLS/ A15

Willie may be liable as show host–DOJ

Palace: No vendetta on Lopezes

By Armand N. Nocum and Norman Bordadora

JUSTICE SECRETARY Raul Gonzalez yesterday said comedian Willie Revillame and organizers of the "Wowowee" show could be held legally liable for the disaster that brought death to 74 people.

Without pinning blame on anyone, the head of the government fact-finding body, Interior Undersecretary Marius Corpus, said organizers of events that end in tragedies, like Saturday's game show extravaganza, could be held liable for "criminal negligence."

Revillame declined to comment on Gonzalez's statement, saying he needed to talk to ABS-CBN first. But he told the INQUIRER that he was merely the game show's host. *(See stories on Page A6 and A17.)*

In a statement, the television network said: "As of now, ABS-CBN is not aware of any cases that have been filed by any of the victims or their families. Should there be any, this will not detract the network from attending to the needs of those affected."

Malacañang stressed that the government probe should not be taken as payback against the Lopez-owned network giant, which has been critical of the administration of late.

"No, not at all, not at all," Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita said.

Gonzalez formed a group of prosecutors headed by Senior State Prosecutor Leo Dacera to evaluate the findings of the Corpus panel before the possible filing of legal action against those

WILLIE/ A6

JOAN BONDOC

MONTH OF HEARTS. A mourner makes an offering for those killed in the stampede. The message on the pillow beside her shows the irony of it all.

Bunye: Don't blame stampede on GMA

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr., Christine O. Avendaño and Luige A. del Puerto

MALACAÑANG YESTERDAY DEcried what it said were efforts by some sectors to turn the tragedy of people being trampled to death during a game show extravaganza into a politically charged poverty issue.

Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye said attempts to use the tragedy to attack President Macapagal-Arroyo were "absurd and out of line."

"Instead, her critics should stand up and be counted in the war against poverty," Bunye said.

"Likewise, we appeal to all parties to refrain from blame tossing and wait for the official results of the investigation."

Bunye said the objective of the investigation was not only to identify those liable but also to come up with measures to prevent a similar incident.

"Saying that this event is a mirror of poverty is carrying it too far," Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita said. "There is a tragedy because of the program."

Ermita added: "If ever there is a stampede during the Feast of the Black Nazarane or during Sinulog, would you blame the

BUNYE/ A6

Cabinet appointees face rough sailing at CA

By Christine O. Avendaño, Gil C. Cabacungan Jr., Philip C. Tubeza and Michael Lim Ubac

MALACAÑANG YESTERDAY named former Rep. Eduardo Antonio Nachura the chief presidential legal counsel amid criticism in the Senate of some of her choices in the latest Cabinet shake-up.

"Nobody's perfect," said Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita. "The President is not King Solomon but she is trying to be Solomon. There will always be questions, but let's see how they perform first."

The President earlier appointed Rep. Ronaldo Puno as secretary of the Department of the Interior and Local Government and Rep. Rolando Andaya as secretary of the Department of Budget and Management while transferring her longtime ally Angelo Reyes to the Department of Environment and Natural Resources from the DILG.

Ermita said it was only coincidental that the new faces in Ms Arroyo's Cabinet were lawmakers, stressing that it was the President's prerogative to pick those who were loyal to her.

Puno used to be DILG secretary in the Estrada administration and had served every government in various capacities since the Marcos dictatorship.

Andaya's experience as chair of the House committee on appropriations will serve him well as budget secretary, Ermita said.

He said Reyes had acquitted himself well in his numerous posts under the Arroyo administration.

When reminded that the Cabinet revamp was far from the government of reconciliation promised by President Arroyo last year, Ermita said Malacañang was considering opposition leaders for Cabinet posts.

"We tapped Mike Romero, one

CABINET/ A15

GMA allies twit 'meeting of strange bedfellows'

By Cynthia D. Balana and Norman Bordadora

ALLIES OF PRESIDENT MACAPAgal-Arroyo yesterday described an unprecedented weekend gathering of opposition leaders as a meeting of strange bedfellows with an impossible dream.

Even so, former President Corazon Aquino and Senate President Franklin Drilon said there was nothing political about Sunday's event—a thanksgiving Mass at the San Juan Medical Center where ex-President Joseph Estrada had undergone corrective eye surgery.

"I just wanted to pray for (Estrada's) successful operation and victims of the tragedy," said Aquino, referring to the deadly stampede that occurred among fans of the popular noontime game show "Wowowee." *(See banner story.)*

"It was a time for prayers, we did not talk politics," said Drilon.

But Estrada said, "*Nagkasundo kaming magtulungan para sa kabutihan ng bayan* (We agreed to cooperate for the good of the nation)." He did not elaborate.

Sunday marked the first time that Aquino, Estrada, Drilon and Susan Roces, widow of the late movie actor and unsuccessful presidential candidate Fernando Poe Jr., came together since they joined mounting calls in July for the resignation of Ms Arroyo over charges that the 58-year-old President stole the 2004 election. Ms Arroyo has denied the charges.

The thanksgiving Mass was also attended by other opposition stalwarts, including Makati Mayor and United Opposition spokesperson Jejomar Binay.

GMA ALLIES/ A15

Research volunteers await arrival of humpback whales

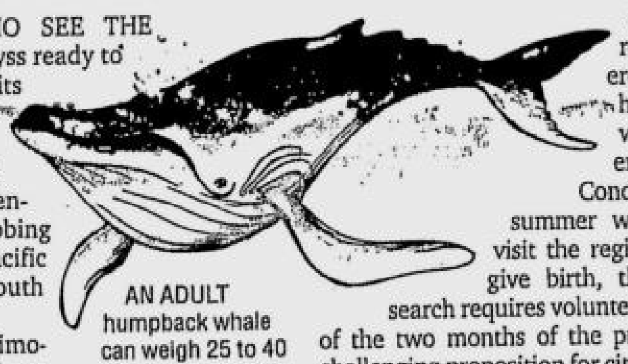


ILLUSTRATION: LAMISTADES

AN ADULT humpback whale can weigh 25 to 40 tons

FOR THOSE WHO SEE THE ocean as a dark abyss ready to suck them into its depths, it must take something big to encourage them to spend an entire summer bobbing between the Pacific Ocean and the South China Sea.

For Gabriel Timoteo, a 33-year-old veterinarian, it took something very big indeed—one of the largest animals on the planet—the humpback whale (*balyena* in Tagalog).

Inspired by tales from fellow vet students at the University of the Philippines, Timoteo found himself in 2001 joining a small team of volunteers from World Wildlife Fund-Philippines to collect data on a recently discovered population of humpbacks in the waters off northern Luzon.

Conducted during the summer when the whales visit the region to breed and give birth, the hands-on research requires volunteers to spend most of the two months of the program afloat—a challenging proposition for city slickers.

"Being near a body of water made me uncomfortable," says Timoteo. "Just the thought of being in the middle of the ocean was frightening."

In spite of his initial reservations, Timoteo fondly describes experiencing a feeling of relief when a sleek, dark dorsal fin harmlessly

RESEARCH/ A15

TOLENTINO
AFP
PHIL ARMY
LUAGUE

LYN RILLON

ONE OF THE BOYS

President Arroyo visits troops in Tarlac after their clashes with communist rebels. She is flanked by Armed Forces Chief of Staff Gen. Generoso Senga (on her left) and regional commander Lt. Gen. Romeo Tolentino (on her right).

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Northern and Eastern Luzon will have mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers, which will be frequent over Aurora and Quezon. The rest of Luzon will be partly cloudy to cloudy with isolated rainshowers. Visayas and Mindanao will have mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and isolated thunderstorms.

COMPILED BY CYRIL L. BONABENTE, PDI RESEARCH/02/07/06 SOURCE PAGASA

E-mail: pr_news@inquirer.com.ph

Second FRONTPAGE

Text us your feedback: inquirer news name/age/city/message to 2207 (Globe) or 283 (Smart)

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	Iloilo/Bacolod	Cloudy with Rains
Baguio	Partly Cloudy	Roxas	Cloudy with Rains
Tuguegarao	Cloudy with Rains	Cebu	Cloudy with Rains
Laoag	Cloudy with Rains	Tacloban	Cloudy with Rains
Clark Zone	Partly Cloudy	Gen. Santos	Cloudy with Rains
Tagaytay	Partly Cloudy	Zamboanga	Cloudy with Rains
Legazpi	Cloudy with Rains	Cagayan de Oro	Cloudy with Rains
Calapan	Cloudy with Rains	Davao	Cloudy with Rains

Cop chiefs fired after NPA raid

By Luigi A. del Puerto and Bert Pacate
PDI Mindanao Bureau

THE PHILIPPINE NATIONAL POLICE FIRED A provincial commander and a municipal police chief yesterday, one day after a band of New People's Army guerrillas, using a town mayor they had earlier abducted as a decoy, raided the police station in the town of Lingig and carted off 11 M16 assault rifles, several pistols and hand grenades, officials said.

The officials said not a single shot was fired during Sunday's raid and that Lingig Mayor Roberto Luna, his body guards and six policemen were left unharmed by the rebels, who escaped in the mayor's Toyota Land Cruiser and Expedition vans.

For their failure to put up a defense, PNP Director General Arturo Lomibao ordered the relief of Senior Supt. Admirante Josue, Surigao del Sur PNP chief, and Lingig Police chief Inspector Evelyn Frugalidad, said PNP spokesman Chief Supt. Leopoldo Bataoil.

"The entire police force of Lingig will undergo retraining and investigation, and will be replaced by personnel from the Provincial Mobile Group," Bataoil added.

Meanwhile, at least three soldiers were wounded yesterday in a clash with the fleeing rebels, who numbered between 40 and 50, according to the police in Tandag, provincial capital of Surigao del Sur. No other details of the encounter were immediately available.

Lingig is about 180 kms south of Tandag.

Reports were not clear as to how Mayor Luna was abducted.

Gov. Vicente Pimentel Jr. said the rebels got hold of the mayor after an ambush in Barangay Pagtilaan at around 2 p.m. Sunday.

But Lt. Col. Francisco Simbajon, spokesman of the Army's 4th Infantry Division based in Cagayan de Oro City, said the rebels snatched Luna from his residence.

Senior Supt. Edgar Agustin, deputy regional police director for administration in the Caraga region, said policemen manning the station "thought it was an inspection led by the mayor, so they let their guard down."

The sacking of the police officers came only a week after Lomibao, reacting to a series of rebel raids on police armories, warned commanders he would fire them if they failed to fight off rebel forces during such raids.

Bataoil told reporters that Lomibao had instructed police commanders to "anticipate enemy raids, attacks, harassments, and other terrorist activities."

"He is deeply concerned over their readiness and initiative to fight insurgency," Bataoil said.

Lomibao said late last month that police should not "be sitting ducks in police stations, (waiting) for our men to be attacked" and he wanted the PNP to be more active in anti-insurgency operations because of the frequency and success of rebel raids.

"Policemen are expected to operate against the insurgents and not wait for the Armed Forces to operate against the insurgents," he had said.

In a separate attack, about 30 guerrillas opened fire on an Army detachment in North Cotabato's Makilala town Saturday, but soldiers and allied militiamen fought back, wounding an undetermined number of rebels and forcing them to withdraw, Army Col. Ruperto Pabustan said.

Security in military outposts in the province has been tightened because of information the rebels planned more attacks, he said. *With reports from Franklin A. Caliguid, PDI Mindanao Bureau and AP*

AFTER A FOUR-DAY state visit, Indian President Abdul Kalam bids farewell the country he called "an ancient and great nation." Seeing him off at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport is Vice President Noli de Castro.

ROGER MARGALLO

Indian president leaves after Congress speech

By Michael Lim Ubac and Nikko Dizon

INDIAN PRESIDENT ABDUL KALAM LEFT yesterday afternoon, capping a four-day state visit with an address before a joint session of Congress.

Vice President Noli de Castro led the Philippine delegation that sent off Kalam, who was accorded foyer honors.

Kalam's visit, the first of an Indian head of state to the Philippines in more than a decade, was expected to boost cooperation in defense, counter terrorism, trade and tourism.

In a well-applauded address of the joint session of Congress yesterday, Kalam yesterday called the Philippines "an ancient and great nation" whose adherence to the values of freedom just like India "could move our nations ahead to greater prosperity and happiness for our people."

The Indian president talked about eliminating poverty and modernizing the electoral system in the country, making available to Filipinos cheap pharmaceutical products from India and increasing trade between the two countries to $2 billion (P104 billion) in the next three years.

He also outlined the "Indo-Philippine Cooperation road map," or "mission mode cooperation" in eight areas of development to "signify close relations between us."

Prior to his address, Speaker Jose de Venecia and Senate President Franklin Drilon conferred the Indian President the Congressional Medal of Achievement for leading the "robust transformation of the world's biggest democracy with a population of over one billion."

The Speaker described India as "the largest democracy on earth."

In his 31-minute speech, Kalam said his large nation was going through a "major challenge of uplifting 260 million people who are now below poverty line."

In a statement which resonated with Filipinos, Kalam said Indians, too, "need habitat, work with reasonable income, food, speedy access to health care, education and finally a good life and hope for a better future."

Gov't, MILF start new round of talks in KL

KUALA LUMPUR – REPRESENTATIVES OF the Philippine government and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front met for peace talks on neutral ground in Malaysia yesterday as both sides sought to end a 40-year conflict that has killed more than 120,000 people.

A peace deal for Muslim areas in the south of the mainly Roman Catholic Philippines is key to alleviating poverty, opening up new mining lands and reassuring investors about a nation seen as a weak link in the war against terrorism.

A truce between the government and MILF has held since July 2003. The previous round of talks ended last September in Port Dickson, a Malaysian resort town, with a consensus on the key issue of ancestral domain, or areas recognized as part of a Muslim homeland.

But there has so far been little progress on other issues such as the form of government for the homeland and the post-conflict future of the MILF's 12,000 guerrillas.

"It's work in progress," Jesus Dureza, Philippine presidential adviser on the peace process, told Reuters yesterday after the two-day talks began with a round of technical meetings.

A full negotiation panel, including Dureza and Agrarian Reform Secretary Nasser Pangandaman, meets today.

"We hope this will be another movement forward because ancestral domain is a crucial issue in this negotiation," Dureza said. He declined to elaborate.

The MILF claims a swathe of mostly Muslim areas on Mindanao, which it says is the ancestral homeland of the Moro people. The matter is complicated by a push by the government to open the region to foreign mining firms.

The Philippines is home to three other Muslim rebel groups and a communist insurgency. Several dozen foreign militants are believed to be in Mindanao.

MILF's chief negotiator, Mohaqher Iqbal, told Reuters last month that the Philippine government and the rebels were in the home stretch of talks, having agreed to 85 percent of the agenda.

Before leaving Manila, Dureza told reporters at the airport yesterday that ancestral domain was "the most complicated issue" and would be at the heart of the Kuala Lumpur talks. *Reuters, with a report from Nikko Dizon*

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Dynamite discovery: It's just like buying vinegar

By Luige A. del Puerto and Jocelyn R. Uy

IN A TOWN NORTH OF METRO MANILA known for rock quarrying, obtaining dynamite is as easy as buying vinegar from the corner store.

"It's that easy. It's just like buying vinegar," remarked one police officer after the Anti-Terrorist Task Group (ATTG) of the Regional Intelligence and Investigation Division (RIID) seized some 100 sticks of dynamite and nine kilos of ammonium nitrate in Norzagaray, Bulacan, over the weekend.

The explosives could easily bring down a three-story building, bomb experts said.

On Saturday, police arrested a man and a woman who sold the explosives to a policeman posing as a fisherman. The police, however, were quick to clarify that Manuel Ban, 38, and Josephine Arrojado, 46, were not terrorists but civilians involved in quarrying in the town.

But they had no license to sell or stockpile the explosive materials.

"Our men went to the market in (Barangay) Bigte, and asked the people where to get dynamite. The people pointed to the house of Toto Ban (Manuel Ban)," said Supt. R'win Pagkalinawan of the ATTG.

"On Friday, we negotiated to buy two sticks, and then we said we'd buy more the next day. It was that easy, which was worrisome," Pagkalinawan said.

Ban was selling the dynamite – with fuse, cord and blasting cap – at P200 each, the police said.

After his arrest, Ban led police to Arrojado, his alleged supplier, who also agreed to sell them some dynamite.

All told, seized from Ban's and Arrojado's homes were about nine kilos of ammonium nitrate, 100 sticks of dynamite, 54 feet of timing fuse, 110 blasting caps and about 500 meters of detonating cord.

The police acted on information provided by a 44-year-old man who was caught at a Metro Manila train station last week with two dynamite sticks in his backpack.

The man claimed he worked for a firm that was building a fish pond in Antipolo City – a claim confirmed by the police.

Metro Manila police chief Director Vidal Querol lamented how easy it was to get hold of deadly materials that could fall into the wrong hands.

"It is not at all impossible that given the ease with which anyone can buy explosives at anytime, that at some time, these explosives and materials (could) be used to make improvised bombs that could (fall) into the hands of terrorists," Querol said in a statement.

The police have found the supplier of the explosives, which were said to have been imported from Malaysia, but refused to identify the person at this time.

The police are checking whether the source is authorized to import, sell and stockpile the explosive materials.

RIID chief Senior Supt. Felipe Rojas Jr. told the INQUIRER yesterday that although the dynamite was not peddled openly, the suspects were well-known for their wares.

"These vendors do not display their illegal wares out on the streets. They depend mostly on word of mouth. They are well-known in the barangay," Rojas said.

SC rejects tax perks for Clark investors

CLARK SPECIAL ECONOMIC ZONE –THE Supreme Court has denied the motion for reconsideration filed by the Bases Conversion Development Authority and the Clark Development Corp. to regain tax incentives for some 400 investors in the ecozone.

The ruling, which was handed down on Dec. 19, 2005, was received here on Friday, CDC president and chief executive officer Antonio Ng told reporters on yesterday.

The high court denied the motion because the state-owned base conversion bodies failed to present substantial arguments to warrant a reversal of the July 29, 2005 decision that stripped investors of the privilege in Clark but upheld it in the case of those doing business at the Subic Bay Freeport Zone in Bataan and Zambales.

Ng said the CDC would file another appeal in 15 days. *Tonette Orejas, PDI Central Luzon Desk*

Fil-Am pilot shot down in Iraq given hero's burial today

- By Volt Contreras

A FILIPINO-AMERICAN HELICOPTER pilot who was killed in war-torn Iraq last month will have a hero's burial today near his hometown in Bulacan.

He will also receive posthumous awards and full military honors from Washington D.C. The US Embassy in Manila yesterday said Chief Warrant Officer Ruel Garcia, 34, will be awarded the Bronze Star, the fourth highest US military award for gallantry in action; the Purple Heart Medal, and the Air Medal.

Expected at his interment are US Brig. Gen. Richard Mills, commanding general of Special Operations Command, Korea; honor guards from the 8th Army Korea, and US Charge d'Affaires Paul Jones.

"We are grateful as this makes the heaviness in our hearts a little bearable," Garcia's father Rosendo said in Filipino of the posthumous honors, when reached on the phone yesterday.

"We believe he died for something good," he added.

The late officer, whose remains arrived last Thursday from Texas where his Army unit was based, will be buried at Polo Memorial Park in Valenzuela, Metro Manila, at around 9 a.m. today, the elder Garcia said.

The wake has been held at the family residence in Barangay Panghulo, Obando, Bulacan.

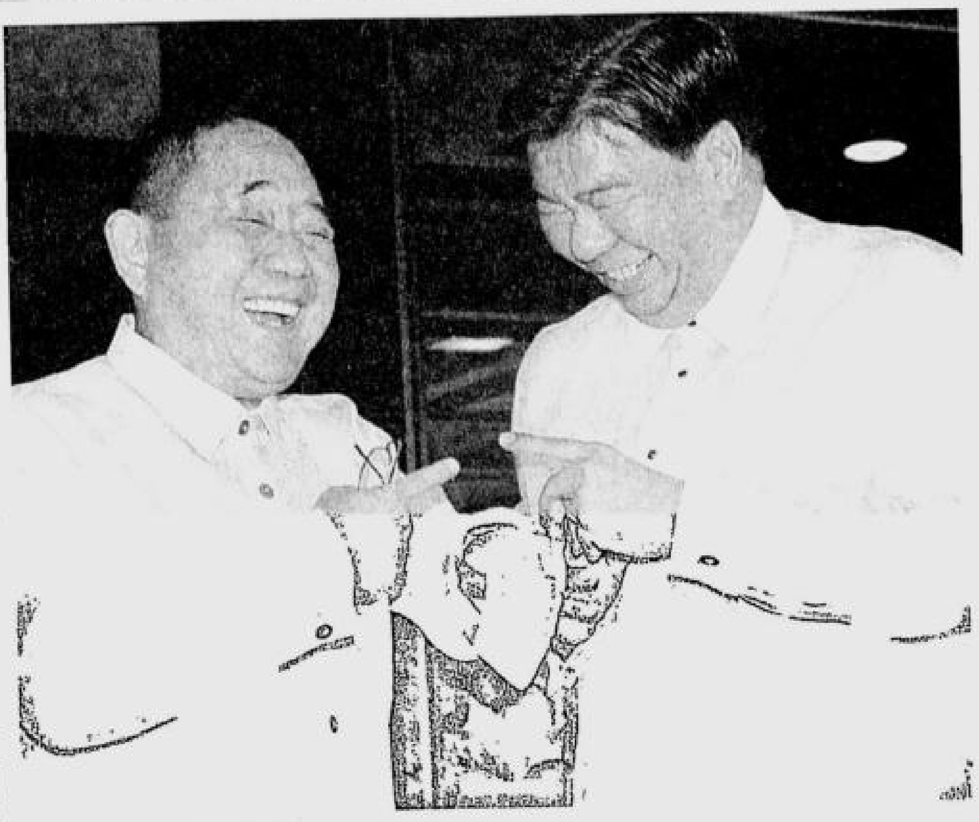
"As these medals demonstrate, his bravery in the field, professional aviation skills and devotion to his adopted country will always be remembered. Chief Garcia made the ultimate sacrifice so that his fellow man can live in peace and freedom," the embassy said in a statement.

Instituted in 1944, the Bronze Star is awarded to any person serving in any capacity in or with the US military for heroic achievement in action against an enemy of the US or a foreign force, or while serving in friendly foreign forces in a conflict in which the US is a not a belligerent party.

The Purple Heart is an award given in the name of the President of the United States to any American military or civilian personnel who has been killed or wounded in any action against an enemy of the US.

The Air Medal is earned by pilots who have distinguished themselves in aerial flight.

Garcia died along with his copilot in a crash after their Apache helicopter gunship was shot down by a surface-to-air missile on the morning of Jan. 16 in Taji, Iraq.



WHAT'S SO FUNNY!
House Speaker Jose de Venecia and Senate President Franklin M. Drilon exchange jokes waiting for Indian President Abdul Kalam's arrival at the Batasan Pambansa. In a well-applauded address of the joint session of Congress yesterday, Kalam talked about eliminating poverty and modernizing the electoral system. JOSEPH VIDAL/PRIB

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Palace says strong peso will silence gov't critics

By Christine O. Avendaño

MALACAÑANG YESTERDAY EXPRESSED elation over the continued strength of the peso against the dollar and said the strong peso would eventually silence the government's critics.

The peso hit 51.74 per dollar on Monday, its strongest level since September 2002, gaining over 2.3 percent in the last two weeks. *(See story on Business, Page B6)*

The currency's rally this year has been fueled by improvements in the fiscal deficit. Expectations this month's increase in the sales tax will fetch the government higher revenues and raise the chances for an upgrade in the country's rating have also buoyed the currency.

"The opposition can heckle all they want but they know the rallying peso represents a resurging economy," Presidential Political Adviser Gabriel Claudio said in a text message.

"Eventually it is the peso that will silence detractors of the government and their destructive type of politics."

Claudio said the Palace was elated by the continued gaining of the peso against the dollar.

While he said the Palace expects government critics to continue to be cynical about the performance of the peso, the people should realize that the strong peso means authorities would able to lick the budget deficit and save millions of pesos for debt servicing.

"Therefore millions of jobs more, infrastructure, education, health and social services," Claudio said.

It will also promote a robust environment for local and foreign investments and according to Claudio this would mean the creation of more jobs for more Filipinos.

With a report from Reuters

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" Troubleshooting Electrical Problems "

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If Appliance Won't Work
- Check for overload circuit, damaged plug or cord, loose wiring, defect in appliance or appliance' lamp.

If Lights on Circuit Won't Work
- Check for overload circuit, short circuit, loose wiring. faulty switch.

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Missing yacht found off Mindoro

By Leila Salaverria

A YACHT CARRYING an Australian and two Filipinos was found yesterday morning, two days after it went missing on its way to Apo Reef in Mindoro.

A Philippine Coast Guard helicopter spotted the ML Passat some 62 nautical miles off Lubang Island.

PCG spokesperson Lt. Commander Joseph Coyme said its three passengers, identified as Australian Tony Walsh, 60, his Filipina wife Leecrita Manungson, 49, and Lolie Marquez, 50, did not appear to be harmed.

Coyme said the PCG's search and rescue vessel left Manila yesterday morning and was expected to reach the yacht's location late in the afternoon.

The ML Passat left Puerto Galera in Mindoro Saturday afternoon for a nearby dive site when it developed engine trouble, Coyme said.

It was first reported missing to the Coast Guard on Feb. 4.

Rescue efforts had been hampered by haze and rough seas.

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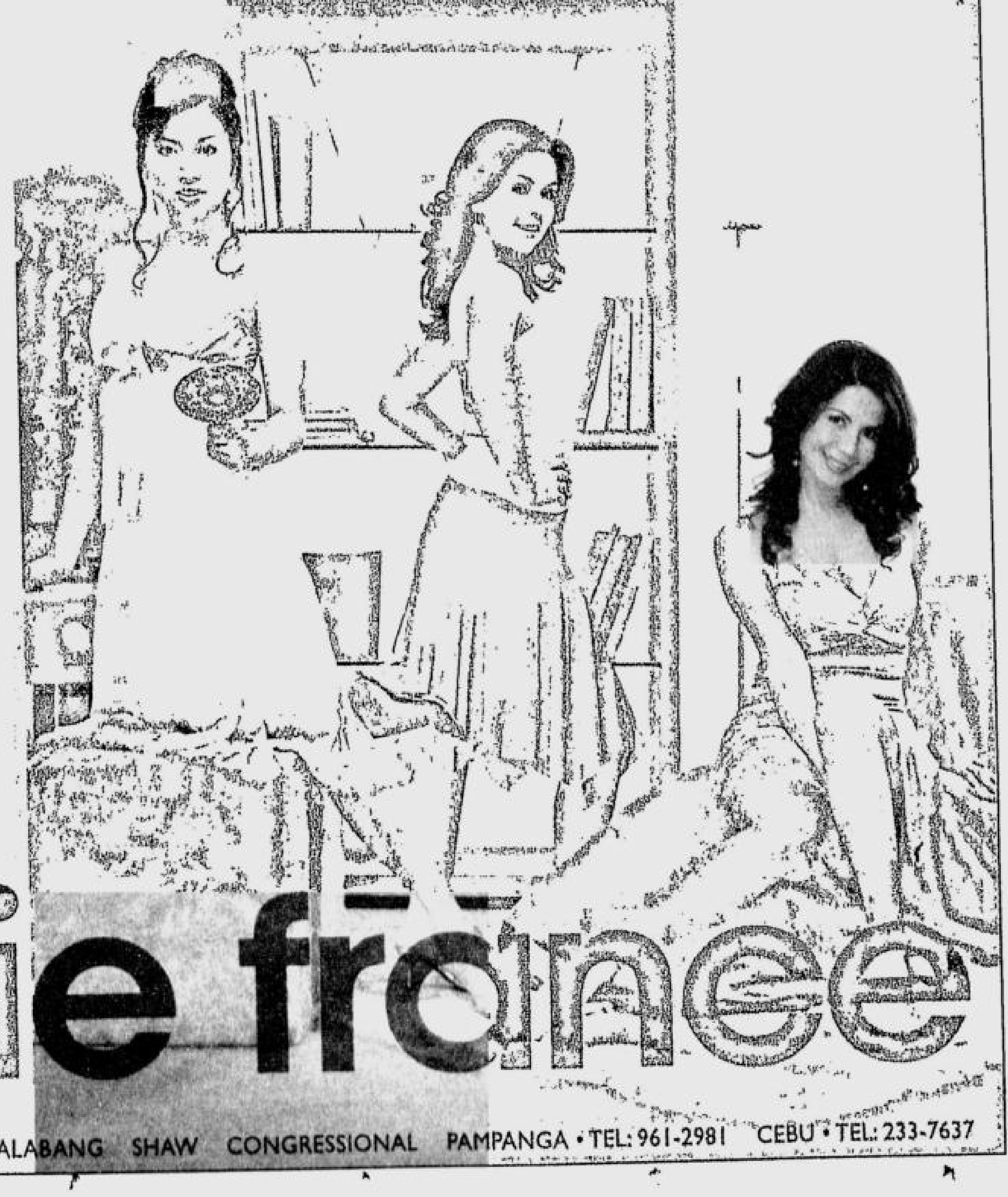

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WAS MONEY USED IN '04 POLLS?

'Special audit' of Marcos funds sought

By Philip C. Tubeza

SENATE PRESIDENT FRANKLIN Drilon yesterday sought a "special audit" of the P35-billion in Marcos Swiss deposits, some of which may have been spent in the runup to the May 2004 presidential elections.

This after Department of Budget and Management records showed P1.4 billion of the funds was released shortly before the polls.

Drilon asked Commission on Audit chief Guillermo Carague to conduct the audit in order to find out if the Arroyo administration had violated the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Law (CARL) when it used part of the Marcos funds in its farm inputs program during the 2004 election campaign.

The administration released P544 million of the Marcos funds weeks before the May 2004 elections to buy seeds and fertilizer for the Ginintuang Masaganang Ani (GMA) hybrid rice program of the government.

But on top of the P544 million, the administration also took from the Marcos funds P500 million for irrigation projects and P900 million for farm-to-market roads, Drilon said.

"I am asking Commissioner Carague to conduct a special audit to determine if there was any violation of the law when part of the Marcos Swiss deposits were diverted from the Department of Agrarian Reform to finance the controversial farm inputs program of the agriculture department," Drilon told the Kapihan sa Manila Hotel media forum.

Drilon pointed out the CARL requires that all ill-gotten wealth recovered from the Marcoses and their cronies be used to implement the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP).

In a March 23, 2004, letter to the Department of Public Works and Highways, former Budget Secretary Emilia Boncodin said P900 million in Marcos funds was released for "implementation of DPWH-CARP infrastructure projects."

That same day, the Department of Budget and Management advised the National Irrigation Administration that P541,741,000 in Marcos funds had been released to pay for "the implementation of activities under the Program Beneficiaries Development Component of CARP."

Given the timing of the releases, Drilon said the COA should determine whether or not the funds reached their intended agrarian reform beneficiaries (ARBs) or if they ended up being used for the elections.

"We must verify allegations that the Marcos money was illegally used during the campaign of President Macapagal-Arroyo considering that the funds were released just a few days before the May 2004 elections," Drilon said.

He said the P544 million that went to the GMA hybrid rice program should also be audited since only 20 percent of the recipients of the hybrid rice seeds were ARBs.

The Presidential Agrarian Reform Council had allowed the use of the Marcos funds for the GMA program since the latter's beneficiaries were supposedly mainly ARBs.

"But only one of every five beneficiaries of these hybrid rice seeds could be considered ARBs. That is in the COA report," Drilon said.

He also pointed out that outgoing Budget Secretary Romulo Neri had admitted to the Senate that only P13 billion of the Marcos funds was left for 2006. Of this total, some $200 million or P11 billion has been set aside for the victims of martial law.

"Therefore, only P2 billion is left. By this time, I am certain the P2 billion has already been spent, given the fact that the support operations of the DAR is also a beneficiary of the Marcos funds," Drilon said.

"This would therefore justify a special audit of the P35 billion Marcos funds which were spent over the last two years. Even former Senate President Jovito R. Salonga raised an issue as to where these monies were spent," he said.

Senate help sought to revive P5.4-B tax credit scam probe

By TJ Burgonio

MORE THAN 10 YEARS AFTER investigating the P5.34-billion tax credit certificate (TCC) scam in the mid-'90s, the government has failed to get any suspect convicted and managed to recover only P11 million, according to a key government witness.

On top of the zero conviction and meager collection, the government has allowed Faustino Chingkoe, one of the principal suspects in the tax credit scam, to travel to China, witness Felix Chingkoe lamented.

Felix, estranged brother of Faustino, made his sentiments known in a letter his lawyer Jose Isagani M. Gonzales sent to Senators Juan Ponce Enrile, who had sought an investigation of the scam, Joker Arroyo and Jinggoy Estrada.

"Mr. Felix Chingkoe and his family have sacrificed so much in order to help the Office of the Ombudsman go after those defrauding the government by manipulating the tax credit program," Gonzales said in the letter.

"Yet it appears as if the Office of the Ombudsman, as well as the other agencies of the government tasked to prosecute the persons responsible for the massive tax credit fraud are not serious enough in their mandate," he added.

Gonzales wrote the letter on behalf of Felix, expressing his client's desire to seek an audience with the senators on the matter.

The scam was uncovered after a post-audit report showed that 64 companies were found to have fraudulently obtained 1,652 TCCs worth P5.349 billion from the Department of Finance's one-stop shop inter-agency tax credit and duty drawback center (OSS center) between 1995 and 1998.

It was also established that some P3.381 billion worth of TCCs were transferred to 61 companies, including Pilipinas Shell and Petron.

A TCC is a document issued by the OSS Center showing that an enterprise has paid tariff duties or internal revenue taxes on raw materials used in the processing of BOI-registered products. It may be used to pay taxes, duties, charges and fees due to the national government.

Out of the 64 companies involved in the scam, 56 were endorsed for investigation to the Task Force 156, a special presidential task force formed in 1999, and the remaining eight to the Ombudsman, Gonzales said in the letter.

When it stopped operations on Oct. 7, 2004, the task force completed investigation of 27 companies only, he said.

Gonzales also noted that the Bureau of Customs managed to file only 60 civil cases against the original grantees out of the 1,652 TCCs seeking P2.4 billion damages.

Of these, 15 cases were dismissed, seven were scheduled for dismissal while another five cases amounting P118 million were settled at 20 percent of the amount claimed. The remaining 33 cases are pending in court.

The Bureau of Internal Revenue, for its part, filed four cases with the Court of Appeals, including one which was dismissed because the government failed to present "clear and convincing evidence showing actual fraud," Gonzales said.

Out of the 1,343 TCCs referred to the task force for investigation, only 90 cases were filed with the Sandiganbayan and while 360 cases remained pending before the Ombudsman, according to Gonzales.

And of the 309 TCCs amounting to P722.3 million that were referred to it, the Ombudsman has completed investigation only on 76 TCCs, he said.

The conviction rate was zero, Gonzales said, adding that The Task Force 156 failed and did not exert efforts to "identify and unmask" the masterminds and beneficial owners of other firms found to be involved in the scam.

AFP ordered to present Rivas before QC court today

By Dona Z. Pazzibugan

IT TOOK A COURT ORDER TO force the military to present military prosecutor Capt. Candelaria Rivas who has been barred from seeing her family since she was arrested with Oakwood mutiny leader, Marine Capt. Nicanor Faeldon last Jan. 27.

The military was ordered to present Rivas today before the Quezon City Regional Trial Court Branch 91 in response to a petition for habeas corpus filed by Rivas' mother, Pensevina Rivas, last Friday.

The court order issued by Judge Lita Tolentino-Genilo was served by court sheriff, Guillermo Lansang before the Intelligence Service of the Armed Forces of the Philippines [Isafp] yesterday morning.

"Yes, we will abide [by the court order]. Our lawyers will produce Captain Rivas before the regional trial court [Tuesday] at 2 p.m.," military spokesman Col. Tristan Kison said.

The military inexplicably barred Rivas from seeing her family and a lawyer since her arrest, while Faeldon was allowed to see lawyers, siblings, even his ex-wife, as well as Sen. Rodolfo Biazon and government doctors who attested he had not been physically tortured during detention.

Rivas, who was one of the prosecutors in the Oakwood mutiny court martial-trial, was with Faeldon when he was captured last Jan. 27, 44 days after he escaped from military custody.

Rivas was transferred from Isafp to the Headquarters and Headquarters Support Command (HHSC) in Camp Aguinaldo last Jan. 31, while Faeldon remained detained at Isafp compound.

Camp Aguinaldo commander Brig. Gen. Jovenal Narcise initially told reporters Friday that they were not allowing visits because Rivas needed "privacy" to prepare her defense.

Minutes later, after talking to AFP Chief of Staff Gen. Generoso Senga, Narcise said he now has authority to allow visits.

When this reporter asked what changed his mind, Narcise shot back: "Why are you asking me that?"

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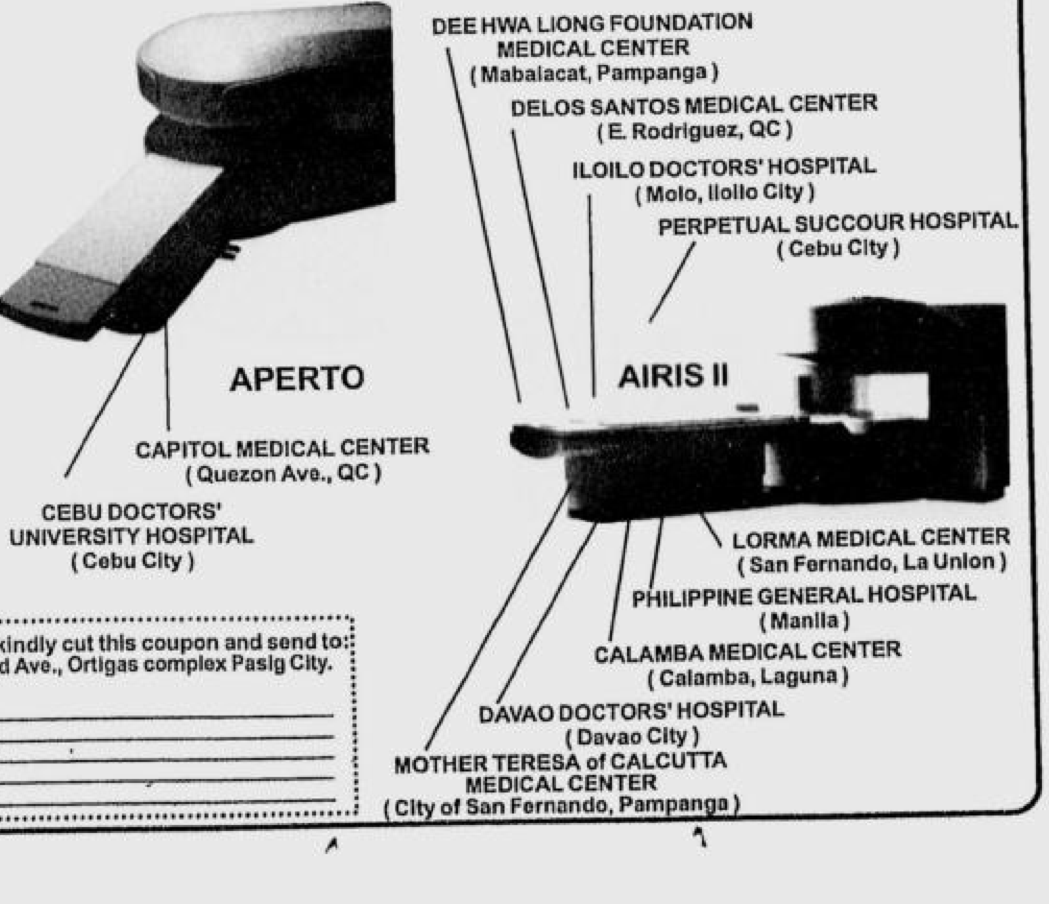
Mommy Eva with Dr. Benigno Santi III of Capitol Medical Center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Correction

IN YESTERDAY'S ISSUE, a front-page story—"Puno takes over DILG; Andaya to DBM"—misstated the name of the newly appointed head of the Department of Social Welfare and Development. The correct name of the new DSWD secretary is Dr. Esperanza—not Estrella—Cabral.

* * *

Readers may send their requests for correction of factual errors in writing to the Day Desk, Philippine Daily Inquirer, PDI Building, Chino Roces Avenue corner Mascardo Street, Makati City, fax Nos. 897-47-93/94; e-mail address: daydesk@inquirer.com.ph.

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THE DAILY GOSPEL

Tuesday, February 7, 2006
5th Week in Ordinary Time

1st Reading: 1 K 8:22-23, 27-30
Gospel: Mark 7:1-13

One day the Pharisees and some teachers of the Law noticed that some of Jesus' disciples were eating their meal with unclean hands, that is, without washing them. Now the Pharisees, and in fact, all the Jews, never eat without washing their hands for they follow the tradition received from their ancestors. Nor do they eat anything when they come from the market without first washing themselves. And there are many other traditions they observe, for example, the ritual washing of cups, pots and plates. So the Pharisees and the teachers of the Law asked him, "Why do your disciples not follow the tradition of the elders, but eat with unclean hands?"

Jesus answered, !You, shallow people! How well Isaiah prophesied of you when he wrote: This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from me. The worship they offer me is worthless, for what they teach are only human rules. You even put aside the commandment of God to hold fast to human tradition."

And Jesus commented, "You have a fine way of disregarding the commandment of God in order to implant your own tradition. For example, Moses said: Do your duty to your father and your mother, and: Whoever curses his father or his mother is to be put to death. But according to you someone could say to his father or mother: 'I already declared Corban, which means "offered to God," what you could have expected from me.' In this case, you no longer let him do anything for a father or mother. So you nullify the word of God through the tradition you have handed on. And you do many other things like that."

Commentary

God cannot be contained in the heavens or in the temple that Solomon built. Solomon prays for protection for the temple, and that God will listen and heed the prayers of those who come to this place. He asks that God listen from his heavenly dwelling place and grant pardon. God is far and other.

Jesus teaches where God is to be found and how we are to pray. We are not to get caught in mere lip service, without reverence or truth, obeying commands with empty hearts and following dogmas of human beings. God is not interested in traditions/practices that replace what is truly worship of God. God wants reverence and total sacrifice of our hearts and lives, and obedience to the Word.

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Gov't told to return cash, gems seized 20 years ago

By Nelson F. Flores

THE SANDIGANBAYAN HAS ORDERED THE Presidential Commission on Good Government and the Department of Budget and Management to return immediately the cash and jewelry they seized 20 years ago from the alleged mistress of the Army commanding general during the Marcos regime.

In a five-page resolution promulgated on Jan. 25, the antigraft court's First Division ordered the return of Elizabeth Dimaano's assets which included cash of P2.87 million and $50,000 and various pieces of jewelry after the Supreme Court dismissed on July 24, 2003 the cases filed against her and Gen. Josephus Ramas.

The dismissal came after Ramas and Dimaano challenged the PCGG's authority to file forfeiture cases before the high court.

The SC held that the PCGG had overstepped its mandate in filing the cases.

Records showed the government filed graft and forfeiture cases against Ramas and Dimaano in 1986 to recover alleged ill-gotten wealth they supposedly acquired through their close association with Marcos.

In March 2005, the Sandiganbayan ordered the return of the cash and jewelry seized from Dimaano.

Government lawyers filed a motion for reconsideration but were overruled in a resolution dated Aug. 1, 2005.

Dimaano then went to the Bureau of Treasury to claim her assets but was told the money had been transferred to the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas because the old bills had been demonetized.

Due to some confusion in the transfer of the money, Dimaano's funds ended up in the government's General Fund.

Accordingly, the Bureau of Treasury said it would not be able to release the money without clearance from the PCGG.

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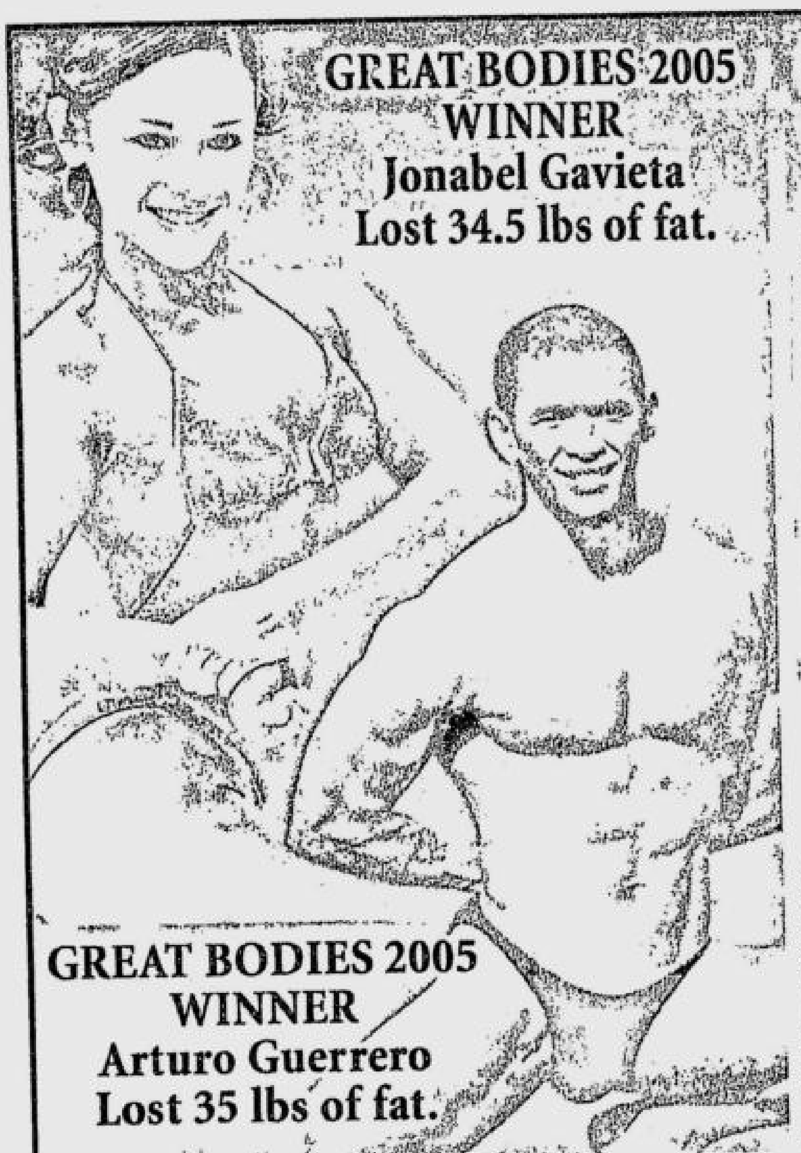

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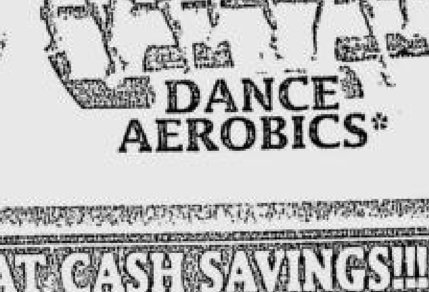

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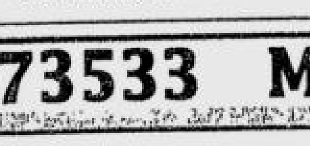

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Willie may be liable as show host–DOJ

From page A1

responsible for the disaster.

"I think we have a strong enough case. Death is proof of liability," he said, adding that the Department of Justice was considering filing a class suit against the organizers but that this would be done only if a victim or the families of those killed would initiate the filing of a case.

Proximate cause

As for Revillame, Gonzalez said it did not help that the show's organizers had admitted that the comedian had taken the "responsibility of getting the prizes, the sponsors, etc." for the show.

"He may still have (a liability) because there is a wide application of the principle of proximate cause. What is the proximate cause of the stampede? It was because there was a show like that ... and eventually the prizes," he said.

"The gathering itself is the proximate cause, that's where the negligence of organizers will come in," he said.

Legally, a proximate cause is defined as that which, in the natural and ordinary sequence of events, unbroken by new and independent causes, produces the event which would otherwise not have occurred.

He said the producers or organizers should have prepared for all eventualities.

Primary responsibility

According to Gonzalez, producers of the game show could face charges of reckless imprudence resulting in multiple homicide, multiple injury and damage, but he declined to pinpoint the extent of the liability pending the result of the fact-finding inquiry.

Reckless imprudence is punishable by six months and one day to six years and one day at its minimum, or six years to 12 years imprisonment. A fine may also be fixed by the court.

Asked who had primary responsibility for the stampede, Gonzalez replied: "At the outset, you'd think first of the organizers. Who are the ones who organized and who have control over the show? If they are the proximate cause, they should be held liable."

"In situations of this nature, where people are expected to gather, you can say 500 or 5,000 people will be attending, you have to consider the capacity (of the venue). ABS-CBN should have anticipated (the crowd). They have been planning this event for one week or so," he added.

Gonzalez said the organizers acted in "bad faith" because they could have held the show in a bigger venue to accommodate their live audience or they could have told people that they could no longer be allowed in.

Unruly crowd

As for those who blamed the unruly crowd for the stampede, he said: "That is not an excuse ... because ABS-CBN assumed the responsibility (for) crowd control within the perimeter which was given to them in the permit given by the local government."

Addressing the question of negligence, Corpus said: "If you're somebody responsible (over a particular event) and you fail to act on certain precautionary measures, or you fail to use your foresight to prevent (an accident from happening), that can be a basis for criminal negligence."

However, Corpus would not say if the organizers were guilty of unlawful carelessness since making that statement would preempt the DOJ's part of the probe.

"That would be preempting the prosecutors of the DOJ," he told the INQUIRER.

Citing what happened, he said: "The crowd was already restless, agitated. (The organizers) should have coordinated efforts regarding crowd control, this time involving the police."

Initial findings

He said the initial findings showed that there were indeed coordination meetings regarding crowd control but that no contingency plans were made for when the crowd grew to an enormous number.

Still, he said, those behind the program could have come up with a plan when the unexpected number of people turned up outside the PhilSports Arena (formerly Ultra).

"The crowds swelled from Friday night to early Saturday morning. Even during that time, you could come up with contingency plans to deal with the amount of people," he said.

The Corpus panel is expected to submit its report to Malacañang today.

Corpus said that with an expected crowd of at least 30,000, the organizers should have prepared for a worst-case scenario.

While it was the DOJ that would pursue the criminal aspect of the investigation, the National Telecommunications Commission would be given a copy of the panel's report "for the administrative aspect," if there would be any, he said.

NBI version

The National Bureau of Investigation said the limited number of tickets to the show might have caused the crowd to rush the gate in a desperate attempt to get in.

Ruel Lasala, NBI-National Capital Region chief, said: "Unlike other events where people buy tickets beforehand, Wowowee organizers gave away the tickets at the venue itself."

Witnesses said the crowd rushed to the gate when organizers began giving out the tickets, NBI-NCR executive officer Rosauro Bautista said.

"A contract between ABS-CBN and Ultra management showed that the former's security personnel would be responsible for crowd control," Bautista said.

Senate probe

Administration Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago filed a resolution yesterday calling for an inquiry into the criminal and civil liabilities of the broadcast network and its officials.

"It appears from the initial DILG investigation that there was inexcusable lack of precaution on the part of the firm ABS-CBN and its security officers," she said in her resolution.

Santiago also sought a transfer of the investigation from the DILG to the Department of Justice to avoid a conflict of interest.

She pointed out that incoming Interior Secretary Rep. Ronaldo Puno was the brother of Regis Puno, ABS-CBN's lawyer in the stampede incident.

Ermita welcomed ABS-CBN's efforts to help the families of the victims but hinted that it might not be enough.

"I read in the newspapers how they are doing their best to extend their help to those affected. We should give them credit for that. But the other liabilities of legal and criminal, that is something that we should await recommendation," he said.

Ermita would not say if he believed the ABS-CBN management was liable for the tragedy.

"I was the one who signed the memorandum order to the NDCC (National Disaster Coordinating Council) to investigate the incident and it would be premature to answer that. We just have to wait for the results of the report," he said. ***With reports from Gil C. Cabacungan Jr., Margaux C. Ortiz and TJ Burgonio***

'We are not exploiting people's poverty'

By Bayani San Diego Jr.
Entertainment

"I AM JUST A TV HOST."

Thus spoke comedian Willie Revillame when asked about the government probe into last weekend's deadly stampede that killed 74 people scrambling to get inside the PhilSports Arena (formerly Ultra) to watch the popular game show "Wowowee."

The probe team is expected to submit its findings to Malacañang today.

In phone interviews on Sunday and yesterday, Revillame said he could not understand the people who pinned the blame on him and ABS-CBN.

"I don't bother with criticisms," he said in Filipino. "I want to give more importance to the people who were hurt or who lost loved ones. Nothing will happen if I listen to intrigues. I just wish these critics will think of the victims instead."

He said he also couldn't fathom comments that game shows encouraged a "culture of mendicancy" and made poor people dependent on dole-outs.

"We are not exploiting people's poverty," Revillame insisted. "This is reality. We cannot toy with people's lives.

"What do they want us to do? Tell the country's poor people to do drugs instead? To steal? In our own little way, we are helping the government. Every day, jobless Filipinos have made a career out of joining our game show. Is it a sin to give people hope? Is it a crime to give away P1 million? Is it wrong to raffle off a house and lot?"

He corrected conflicting reports on the prizes at stake for the show's first anniversary.

"No, it's not true that raffle tickets were to be given to the first 300 people," he said. "But 300 contestants would be chosen that day, their names to be drawn that day. It's just sad that they were in a rush to get tickets."

The prizes

He admitted that he had worked hard to solicit the prizes: P1 million in cash and a house and lot for an audience member and a home partner, a jeepney and three taxi cabs.

"I approached different companies for the additional prizes like WL Foods (for the home partner's cash prize and jeepney), Globe Asiatic (for the house and lot) and Black Beauty Shampoo (for the taxi cabs)," he said. "We also raised $17,000 from TFC (The Filipino Channel) subscribers, which was to be converted to pesos. We planned to raffle off P20,000 to different audience members that day."

Revillame added: "It's not true that the first 50 audience members were assured of P10,000. There would still be a raffle to be held throughout the show. Different people helped and pooled their resources to make this anniversary show a success."

A devastated comedian

Instead of a celebration, the anniversary show turned into a nightmare, said Revillame.

"Devastated" was how friend and former manager Wyngard Tracy described Revillame.

When he guested on another ABS-CBN show, "The Buzz," a day after the incident, the usually glib and gregarious Revillame had been turned into a sobbing figure.

He even hinted that he might not have the strength to continue hosting the game show.

He still sounded shaken when he spoke to the INQUIRER.

"I am really depressed," he said. "Until now, what happened has yet to sink in. I keep asking myself: Is this real? Why did it happen? I can't face people. But life must go on. Right now, I want to concentrate on the victims. Not the show."

74 dreamers

He said he was devoting the entire week to the victims' families.

"I want to visit the families of the 74 people who died," he said. "We now call them the 74 dreamers. I will try to go to all of them. I might even go to Iloilo, Cagayan de Oro and other provinces."

That's why he is taking a one-week leave from his hosting chores on the show, he said.

"I cannot block my feelings," he said. "I cannot entertain people every day when, deep in my heart, I am not happy."

No, he is not resigning from the show, he said.

"It's just one week. But I might extend my vacation, depending on how I feel."

He said his bosses at ABS-CBN assured him that he could take his time to recover.

"They told me we should talk first, that I might need counseling or whatever. I need to weigh everything carefully. But my priority right now is to spend time with the families."

Bunye: Don't blame stampede on GMA

From page A1

Church and the government for poverty? How come during much bigger events, such as the congregation of El Shaddai, where thousands attend, they are properly managed by their leaders? Nothing happens like that."

"We would like to remind the people not to carry the issue too far," he added.

On the appointment of Antipolo Rep. Ronaldo Puno to the Department of the Interior and Local Government, Ermita said Puno would take over the post only after the DILG had completed its probe of the "Wowowee" tragedy.

Two of Puno's brothers are top executives of ABS-CBN.

Bizarre side

The stampede revealed what a police officer said was a "bizarre side" of the Filipino psyche.

Director Vidal Querol, chief of the National Capital Region Police Office, said that an hour after the deadly stampede, he saw hundreds of people still wanting to get into the venue, even though they could see the bodies sprawled on the sidewalk.

"The dead were there, some 20 of them, lined up on one side of the street. There were also about 10 bodies further down, but the people still did not want to go home. It was bizarre," Querol said.

"They were unnerved and unmindful," he added.

"EAT, my friends, have some water," Rosalina Morales, 55, yells as she sprinkles water and leaves noodles at the site where some of her friends died during Saturday's stampede outside the PhilSports Arena. JOAN BONDOC

The "normal" reaction would have been to cry in despair at the madness of it all and then go home, he said.

At one point, Querol did tell the people to go home.

But they held up their hands, showed him their tickets, and protested, he said.

"I told them to go home, that the program had been canceled. They said, 'No, we won't, we have tickets.'"

"More than (70) people are dead, and they were still hanging on to their tickets," he said.

While Querol could not offer an answer as to why the people wanted the show to go on despite the tragedy, he surmised that it was the chance to win some money which made them react that way.

He likened the show to a pilgrimage, and the people the pilgrims. Once they had arrived at their destination, it would have been very difficult to turn them away.

A Catholic Church group said the stampede only showed the "great discrepancy of our publicly professed macroeconomic success vis-a-vis the plight of our poor Filipino compatriots."

"We need to get our act together in addressing this concern lest we see this event to occur once again," said the Parish Pastoral Council for Responsible Voting (PPCRV), the church poll watchdog made up of volunteers nationwide.

Its board of advisers include Archbishops Gaudencio Rosales of Manila and Leonardo Legaspi of Caceres, and Bishops Teodoro Bacani, Dinualdo Gutierrez, Gabriel Reyes and Ramon Villena. *With a report from Christian V. Esguerra*

350 lose jobs daily, says group

By Blanche S. Rivera

AROUND 350 FILIPINOS LOSE THEIR jobs everyday, adding to the more than 2.6 million the government says are already unemployed. Some 20 million people are homeless and more than two million children aged five and below are malnourished.

The urban poor group Katipunan ng Damayang Mahihirap (Kadamay) yesterday came out with the statistics to show the overwhelming poverty that drove thousands of people to the Philsports Arena (formerly Ultra) on Saturday to watch a televised game show that turned into a massive tragedy.

Kadamay said that up to 75,834 families had lost their homes in demolitions and fires whose causes remained suspicious or unexplained.

About 14,000 vendors all over the metropolis have either been driven out of their spaces or had their stalls demolished by the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority, the group claimed.

Kadamay said that 350 people are laid off from work daily, citing a study by the Ecumenical Institute for Labor Education and Research. It claimed the unemployed population stood at 4.8 million.

The National Statistics Office placed the unemployment figure at 2.6 million, and the number of malnourished Filipino children below five years old at 2.1 million.

Medical tourism plan offers Filipino massage

From page A1

feature of major hospitals in Metro Manila to lure more foreigners to its medical tourism program.

A 2,500-square-meter complex at the East Avenue Medical Center is scheduled for a facelift to house a new Institute for Filipino Massage, as well as a health and wellness center, by October, according to Health Undersecretary Jade del Mundo.

The institute will be the main facility promoting indigenous Filipino massage therapies to both local and foreign patients. The centers will highlight traditional and alternative health care, such as herbal medicine, naturopathy and chiropractic medicine.

Later on, Del Mundo said, other government hospitals would house similar institutes and centers under the medical tourism program. Private hospitals would also be encouraged to follow suit, he said.

"The goal is to market our own brand of health care," he told the INQUIRER in an interview.

The construction of the new centers will be another strategy in the promising local medical tourism program from which the government is expecting to earn $300 million (P15.6 billion) in its maiden year.

Del Mundo said industry leaders, like India and Thailand, that began their respective programs in the late 1990s, recorded their highest annual revenue of $600 million (P31.2 billion) only last year.

"The prospects are really promising for the Philippines," he said, noting Filipino health professionals' expertise and good command of the English language.

Part of the program is an aggressive marketing of the Filipino *hilot* (massage) primarily using virgin coconut oil, he said.

Indigenous massage

On April 18-19, the government will hold the Philippine Indigenous Massage Festival at the Manila Pavilion Hotel, showcasing nine indigenous techniques that represent Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao.

Participants will be selected from regional competitions initiated by the DOH, Del Mundo said.

Representatives of each group would then be tapped as instructors of people seeking jobs at the planned government spas and wellness centers in hospitals, he said.

Del Mundo said the different forms of indigenous massage and their practitioners would subscribe to a manual and code of ethics for *hilot* and *herbolaryo* (herbologist) which would be developed during the festival.

Philippine Society of Hypertension & Philippine Lipid Society
Joint 11th Annual Convention

"Bridging the Gap Between the Science and Clinical Practice in the Management of Hypertension and Dyslipidemia"

February 9 - 11, 2006
EDSA Shangri-La Hotel, Mandaluyong City

Experts tackle clinical application of new advances in hypertension and dyslipidemia

Nelson S. Abelardo, MD
President
Philippine Society of Hypertension

Mary Anne VA Lim-Abrahan, MD
President
Philippine Lipid Society

Esperanza I. Cabral, MD
Overall Chairperson
11th Joint PSH-PLS Convention

The problems posed by hypertension and dyslipidemia are getting bigger and more complex requiring a holistic and comprehensive approach. New developments can help medical professionals in a more effective effort to manage, control and prevent these risk factors.

Medical experts from various specialties will tackle new developments in hypertension and cholesterol problems or dyslipidemia, which are the major risk factors that cause heart attacks and strokes in the country. This will be the major focus of discussion during the 11th Joint Annual Convention of the Philippine Society of Hypertension (PSH) and Philippine Lipid Society (PLS).

The convention is organized in cooperation with 22 of the country's top medical societies and professional health organizations.

The convention includes lectures and discussions on the latest advances in the management of hypertension and dyslipidemia and its prevention. The scientific program consisting of three plenary lectures, 11 simultaneous symposia, 10 satellite lunch and dinner symposia, a grand debate on the metabolic syndrome, a pre-convention workshop on essential figures and normal values which all practicing doctors should know, and an interactive lay forum.

Original and unpublished research works on hypertension and dyslipidemia, some of which have been supported by the PSH and PLS, will be presented in poster sessions daily.

More than 50 lectures by the country's leading experts on hypertension, dyslipidemia and the metabolic syndrome will be delivered in what promises to be a very informative meeting of the country's medical practitioners and healthcare professionals who treat patients with hypertension and dyslipidemia.

The finalists of the PSH-Therapharma Yolando Q.M Sulit Young Investigator's Award and the PLS-Pfizer Research Award will also be presented and the winners announced. During the closing ceremonies, nine members who have completed all requirements and passed the qualifying exams will be conferred the title of Hypertension Specialist.

More than 1,500 delegates are expected to attend the convention which has become a melting pot of various medical specialists (cardiologists, endocrinologists, diabetologists, nephrologists, neurologists, general internists, family physicians, nutritionists, etc.) who are all involved in treating the complex problems which hypertension and dyslipidemia cause.

Dr. Nelson S. Abelardo, PSH president and Dr. Mary Anne Lim Abrahan, PLS president, said the problems posed by hypertension and dyslipidemia are getting bigger and more complex. They recommend that the best way to address the problem is through a holistic and comprehensive approach.

Dr. Esperanza I. Cabral, overall chairperson of the organizing committee, said there are numerous developments and advances in the fields of hypertension and lipidology that can help medical professionals in the effort to manage, control and prevent hypertension and dyslipidemia.

For convention inquiries and registration, interested physicians and healthcare professionals may call the PSH-PLS Secretariat at 631-7970 or 687-7073. Registration on-site will be accommodated but delegates are advised to register beforehand to avoid the long queue on opening day.

Aiming beyond numbers, visceral fat and CVD prevention in women

Three plenary lectures, to be delivered by three of the country's leading authorities on the subject, will address important issues in hypertension and dyslipidemia.

Dr. Romeo Divinagracia, professor in Medicine and Cardiology at the UERMMC and an incumbent officer of the Philippine Society of Hypertension, will present his dissertation entitled "Hypertension and Dyslipidemia: Are they just numbers?" Dr. Mary Anne Lim-Abrahan, president of the Philippine Lipid Society, will lecture on "Visceral Fat in Type 2 Diabetes Mellitus, Dyslipidemia and Cardiovascular Disease". Dr. Esperanza Cabral, immediate past president of the Philippine Society of Hypertension and current 1st vice-president of the Philippine Lipid Society, will tackle the important topic of "Cardiovascular Risk Management in Women: Better Late than Never".

According to Dr. Divinagracia, a breakthrough in the treatment of atherosclerotic cardiovascular disease came with the establishment of the relationship between control of hypertension and dyslipidemia with drugs, and the associated reduction in clinical outcomes. Different classes of drugs have been developed which not only reduced the blood pressure and cholesterol "numbers" but possessed other pharmacological properties that helped reduce the progression, if not reverse the atherosclerotic pathologic process. "This consequently resulted in better clinical outcomes," Dr. Divinagracia says.

Dr. Lim-Abrahan will present scientific data correlating visceral or intra-abdominal fat with diabetes, cholesterol problems and cardiovascular disease. "Most type 2 diabetic patients are overweight or obese and have too much fat in the abdomen," says Dr. Lim-Abrahan. She explains that diabetics have excessive fat deposition in muscle, liver and visceral fat tissues compromising their ability to store triglycerides, which is another form of fat. This then leads to insulin resistance in the muscle and liver; and coupled with the reduced secretion of insulin from the pancreas, elevated blood sugar or diabetes develops.

"The good news is that these dysfunctional fat cells can be converted back to healthy fat cells," Dr. Lim-Abrahan says. She will be expounding on this during her plenary lecture.

Dr. Cabral raises the alarm for the increasing prevalence of heart disease and stroke among Filipino women. She laments that a focus on heart disease and stroke in women is lacking and our national capacity to respond to the cardiovascular epidemic has been woefully inadequate. "It is important to deal with these scourges and remember that there are nearly 50,000 women who die each year from heart disease and stroke," says Dr. Cabral.

Dr. Cabral, who is also currently the chair of the Council for Cardiovascular Prevention in Women of the Philippine Heart Association, stresses that that we must strongly address the socioeconomic factors, together with adverse commercial interests that are largely responsible for unhealthy diets, tobacco smoking and physical inactivity among Filipino women.

Ensure health, well-being and empower the people-Pres. GMA

Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo
President
Republic of the Philippines

Francisco T. Duque III, MD, MSC.
Secretary of Health
Department of Health

Modesto O. Llamas, MD
President
Philippine Medical Association

President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo has exhorted the Philippine Society of Hypertension and Philippine Lipid Society to support her goal to give our less fortunate countrymen access to quality health and medical services.

"By ensuring the health and well-being of our people, we are empowering them to be productive and effective stakeholders in nation-building," the president stated in her message to the PSH-PLS.

President Arroyo added that while we have gains in health service delivery during the past years, we are still looking forward to do more and invest more to safeguard our people's health. "In doing so, we seek to work with medical professionals, such as your group, in order to protect the health of our people," she said.

Health secretary Francisco T. Duque, MD and PMA president Modesto O. Llamas, MD, have also joined President Arroyo in sending congratulatory messages to the PSH-PLS.

"I commend both your organizations for the noble purpose of continuously educating and training your members through scientific sessions and research which greatly improve the treatment and management of various diseases in the country," Secretary Duque said. He has also exhorted the members of the PSH-PLS to work with the health sector to deliver a more effective healthcare system.

Dr. Llamas has commended the multisectoral network and collaboration which the PSH and PLS have initiated to carry out projects which address the prevention of hypertension and dyslipidemia including research undertakings. "It is heartening that with the growth and development in healthcare, your organizations are bringing in new knowledge that can be shared to our colleagues in improving their practice in order to alleviate these lifestyle-related diseases affecting our countrymen," Dr. Llamas said.

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Dr. Elizabeth T. Paz-Pacheco

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Dr. Lynn A. Gomez
Dr. Rosa Allyn G. Sy
Dr. Felix Eduardo R. Punzalan

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Members : Dr. Felix Eduardo R. Punzalan
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2006 PLS-PFIZER RESEARCH AWARDS
Overall Coordinator : Dr. Felix Eduardo R. Punzalan

2006 PSH-THERAPHARMA YOLANDO Q.M. SULIT YOUNG INVESTIGATORS AWARDS
Overall Coordinator : Dr. Bernadette A. Tumanan-Mendoza

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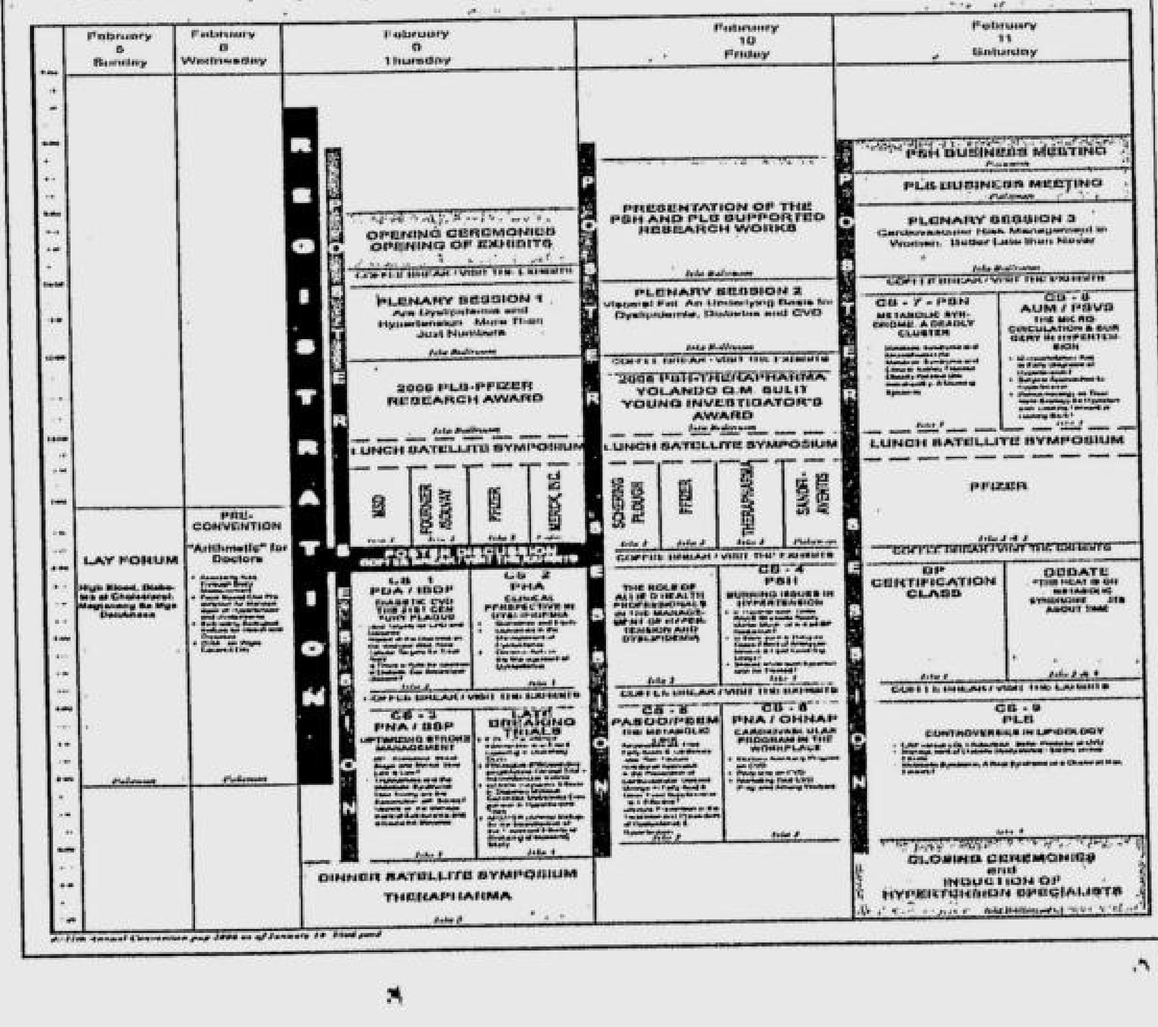

February 5 Sunday
LAY FORUM

February 8 Wednesday
PRE-CONVENTION
"Arithmetic" for Doctors

February 9 Thursday
REGISTRATION
POSTER SESSION
OPENING CEREMONIES
OPENING OF EXHIBITS
PLENARY SESSION 1
Are Dyslipidemia and Hypertension More Than Just Numbers
2006 PLS-PFIZER RESEARCH AWARD
LUNCH SATELLITE SYMPOSIUM
MSD | FOURNIER / ABBOTT | PFIZER | MERCK, INC.
POSTER DISCUSSION
CS - 1 PDA / ISDF
CS - 2 PHA
CS - 3 PNA / SSP
LATE BREAKING TRIALS
DINNER SATELLITE SYMPOSIUM
THERAPHARMA

February 10 Friday
POSTER SESSION
PRESENTATION OF THE PSH AND PLS SUPPORTED RESEARCH WORKS
PLENARY SESSION 2
Visceral Fat: An Underlying Basis for Dyslipidemia, Diabetes and CVD
2006 PSH-THERAPHARMA YOLANDO Q.M. SULIT YOUNG INVESTIGATOR'S AWARD
LUNCH SATELLITE SYMPOSIUM
SCHERING PLOUGH | PFIZER | THERAPHARMA | SANOFI-AVENTIS
CS - 4 PSH
CS - 5 PASOO/PSEM
CS - 6 PNA / OHNAP

February 11 Saturday
POSTER SESSION
PSH BUSINESS MEETING
PLS BUSINESS MEETING
PLENARY SESSION 3
Cardiovascular Risk Management in Women: Better Late than Never
CS - 7 - PSH
CS - 8 AUM / PSVS
LUNCH SATELLITE SYMPOSIUM
PFIZER
BP CERTIFICATION CLASS
CS - 9 PLS
CONTROVERSIES IN LIPIDOLOGY
CLOSING CEREMONIES and INDUCTION OF HYPERTENSION SPECIALISTS

JOINT 11TH PSH-PLS ANNUAL CONVENTION

Speakers:

Ms. Zenaida Abanilla
Dr. Nelson Abelardo
Dr. Lynn Almazan-Gomez
Dr. Raquel Alvarez
Dr. Editha Arceo-Dalisay
Dr. Joselito Atabug
Dr. Leo Carlo Baloloy
Dr. Alejandro Baroque
Dr. Adolfo Bellosillo
Dr. Esperanza Cabral
Dr. Rafael Castillo
Ms. Prescy Cruz
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Dr. Romeo Divinagracia
Dr. Ruby Go
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Dr. Tommy Ty-Willing
Ms. Felicidad Velandria, RND
Dr. Eloisa Villaraza
Dr. Susan Yu-Gan

The Organizing Committee of the PSH & PLS expresses sincere gratitude to the following cooperating societies / organizations and companies for their support to its Joint 11th Convention.

Department of Health (DOH)
Asian Union for Microcirculation (AUM - Philippine Chapter)
Philippine Heart Association (PHA)
Philippine Society of Endocrinology and Metabolism (PSEM)
Philippine Diabetes Association (PDA)
Stroke Society of the Philippines (SSP)
Philippine Society of Nephrology (PSN)
Philippine Neurological Association (PNA)
Philippine Society of Vascular Surgeons (PSVS)
Philippine Academy of Family Physicians (PAFP)
Philippine Association of Government Medical Practitioners, Inc. (PAGMPI)
Philippine Association of Military Surgeons (PAMS)
Philippine Academy of Physicians in School Health, Inc. (PAPSHI)
Philippine College of Occupational Medicine (PCOM)
Philippine Association for the Study of Overweight and Obesity (PASOO)
Institute for Studies on Diabetes Foundation, Inc. (ISDF)
Philippine Nurses Association (PNA)
Occupational Health Nurses Association of the Philippines (OHNAP)
Food and Nutrition Research Institute (FNRI)
Nutritionist Dietitians Association of the Philippines (NDAP)
Philippine Health Social Science Association (PHSSA)
Philippine Association of Medical Technologists (PAMET)
Philippine Physical Therapy Association (PPTA)
Philippine Medical Association (PMA)

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Muslim outrage over cartoons rises

BEIRUT, LEBANON—LEBANON APOLOGIZED MONday to Denmark after thousands of rampaging Muslim demonstrators set fire to its diplomatic mission in Beirut in the most violent of escalating worldwide rage by Muslims over caricatures of the Prophet Muhammad.

One demonstrator was killed and four were wounded Monday after police opened fire during protests that erupted across Afghanistan against the cartoons.

Police opened fire when protesters started throwing stones in a second day of demonstrations by about 1,000 people in eastern Laghman province, provincial information director Hamraz Nangarhari said.

Five people were wounded including the man who died in hospital in the nearby city of Jalalabad, local doctor Mohammad Farid said.

Thousands of people marched in several cities in Afghanistan, including the capital Kabul, to denounce the cartoons which Muslims say are blasphemous.

At least 15 people were killed in Afghanistan in May last year in protests that erupted after US magazine Newsweek reported that the Koran had been disrespectfully treated at a US detention facility in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.

Lebanon Information Minister Ghazi Aridi said early Monday that the government had unanimously "rejected and condemned the acts of riots ... that harmed Lebanon's reputation and its civilized image and the noble aim of the demonstration."

"The Cabinet apologizes to Denmark," Aridi said.

At least one person died, 30 were injured—half of them security officials—and about 200 people were detained in the violence Sunday, officials said. Prime Minister Fuad Saniora said the arrested included 76 Syrians, 35 Palestinians and 38 Lebanese.

The interior minister, who is responsible for the police force that failed to stop the protesters, submitted his resignation at the session. The parliamentary opposition and even some Cabinet colleagues of Interior Minister Hassan Sabei had demanded he step down, but the government appeared divided, saying it only "took note" of the resignation offer.

The government also called for a speedy investigation.

The Beirut violence came a day after violent protests in neighboring Syria, including the burning of the Danish mission there. The United States accused the Syrian government of backing the protests in Lebanon and Syria.

Thousands also took to the streets Sunday elsewhere in the Muslim world and parts of Europe, including some 3,000 Afghans who burned a Danish flag and demanding that the editors at Jyllands-Posten—which originally published the cartoons—be prosecuted for blasphemy. Afghan President Hamid Karzai urged forgiveness.

In Malaysia, an editor at a small newspaper on remote Borneo Island resigned for reprinting the caricatures and, in a statement Monday, the Sunday Tribune newspaper apologized and expressed "profound regret over the unauthorized publication."

The Islamic Army in Iraq, a key group in the insurgency fighting US-led and Iraqi forces, posted a second Internet statement Sunday calling for violence against citizens of countries where the caricatures have been published.

In Beirut, the attack on the Danish mission took on a sectarian dimension in this mixed Muslim-Christian nation, which suffered a 1975-90 civil war. Muslim extremists took over the streets in the Christian Ashrafieh neighborhood where the Danish mission is located, wreaking havoc on property for about three hours. *AP/AFP*

HUNDREDS of Danes gathered in Copenhagen on Sunday to appeal for "peaceful dialogue" to resolve a row that has erupted over the publication of cartoons of the Prophet Muhammad. AFP

Amid genuine anger, some see hand of gov'ts in riots

By Bassem Mroue

DAMASCUS, SYRIA—CROWDS SET FIRE TO Danish and Norwegian missions in Damascus and storm the Danish Embassy in Beirut. Gunmen seize European offices in the Gaza Strip.

The Middle East has for months been a powder keg of pent-up anti-Western anger over the war in Iraq and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and the European publication of caricatures of the Prophet Muhammad seems to have been the spark that lit the fuse.

But the genuine anger displayed by crowds in Syria, Lebanon, the Palestinian territories and Iraq also may have been exploited or intensified by some Muslim countries in the region to settle scores with Western powers, observers said.

Syria and Iran face growing pressure from the Americans and the Europeans on the issues of foreign extremists infiltrating Iraq's borders and on Tehran's nuclear program. And Egypt, one of the first to publicly criticize the series of cartoons, has been critical of the Danish government for funding critics of human rights abuses.

"This is an organized attempt to take advantage of Muslim anger for purposes that do not serve the interests of Muslims and Lebanon, but those of others beyond the border," Lebanese Social Affairs Minister Nayla Mouawad, a Christian, said Sunday after riots in Beirut.

Syria blamed Denmark for the protests, criticizing the Scandinavian nation for refusing to apologize after the caricatures were first published in September in the Danish newspaper Jyllands-Posten.

Denmark's Prime Minister Anders Fogh Rasmussen has said he personally disapproves of the caricatures and any attacks on religion—but insisted he cannot apologize on behalf of his country's independent press.

The caricatures, which have been republished recently in several European and New Zealand newspapers as a statement on behalf of a free press, provoked a genuine and deep anger among many Muslims as Islamic tradition forbids any depiction of the religion's holiest figure.

One caricature showed the revered prophet wearing a turban shaped like a bomb with a burning fuse. That image that reinforced the belief among many Muslims that the US-led wars in Afghanistan and Iraq were not simply in response to the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks or the threat posed by Saddam Hussein, but part of a Western war against Islam little different from the Crusades of the Middle Ages.

Although many Muslims were appalled by the terror attacks on the United States, images of abuse by American soldiers at Iraq's Abu Ghraib prison and reports of deplorable conditions at the Guantanamo Bay prison also have reinforced suspicions that Arabs in general have become targets of the antiterror war.

The fact that the biggest riots occurred in the Syrian capital and in Beirut also raised questions: Syria has an extensive security network to make sure that little happens inside its borders without the approval of the national leadership. *AP*

Most hit in ferry tragedy were poor migrant workers

SAFAGA, EGYPT—MOST OF THE passengers on the ferry that sank in the Red Sea were poor Egyptian villagers who had found jobs in the Gulf and were bringing months if not years worth of savings back to their families.

"Had he been rich, he would never have gone to Kuwait," said Mahmud Keleb, who travelled to the doomed ship's port of destination from his village near the southern city of Sohag to look for his uncle Abdelhamid.

His uncle had found a job as a construction worker and used to send money back to Egypt regularly. "The family survived thanks to him," said Keleb.

Hundreds of relatives of missing passengers were still gathered in Safaga on Monday, eagerly awaiting information on the fate of their loved ones as search and rescue operations entered their fourth day.

Less than 400 of the 1,415 were confirmed to have been rescued by Sunday night, amid dwindling chances of finding any more survivors and growing fears that the sinking of the Al-Salam Boccaccio 98 would become one of the worst maritime disasters in recent history.

More than 1.5 million Egyptians are believed to be working in Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Iraq alone, many as day laborers and some with permanent contracts.

Migrant workers inject billions of dollars a year into the Egyptian economy. Their remittances are the country's second source of income after tourism.

Mahmud has stopped believing his uncle can still be rescued. "Poverty is going to hit the family. I'm just waiting for the body, my mother asked me to."

Further north, in the larger town of Hurghada, Gamal was waiting outside the hospital, hoping to obtain information on the fate of his brother, whom he had not seen since he left to work as a builder in Saudi Arabia and Kuwait.

"Everybody on the boat was bringing lots of money, years of savings, but now everybody wants life," he said.

Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak promised to pay $2,600 to the survivors and twice that amount to bereaved families.

"All this money is nothing compared to people's lives. Nobody is thinking about money. If I could see my brother's body, I'd give more money than that," Gamal said.

Most of Egypt's expatriate workforce is employed for tough jobs on oil fields or construction sites and have had to face increasing competition from Asian immigrants.

Their salaries in the Gulf remain very modest and most of them choose to pay around $50 for a ferry ticket rather than eight or ten times that price to fly back home.

The lack of information on the fate of the Al-Salam's passengers has sparked an anxiety among the families which sporadically spilled over into violence in Safaga.

But Mustafa Hashem was spending most of the agonizing wait for news of his 47-year-old brother Said at the mosque. "I am still hoping, I'm hoping, everyone is hoping," he said haltingly. *AFP*

PNOC ENERGY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION
Merritt Road, Fort Bonifacio, 1200 Taguig City, Philippines
PNOC P.O. Box 2102 MCPO Tel. Nos. 893-6001 to 47 / 893-1320 Fax No. 840-1575

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

PNOC - Energy Development Corporation (PNOC-EDC) invites interested contractors to apply for eligibility and to bid for the project:

2006-2008 WAREHOUSE RENTAL FOR PNOC-EDC
EDC 05-213

The Approved Budget is P16,099,600.00 chargeable against PNOC-EDC fund. The contract duration is 2 years

Application Forms for Eligibility and Bid Documents may be secured from the PNOC EDC Contracts Administration Group (c/o R.A. Sison) starting January 31, 2006 upon payment of a non-refundable fee of **Pesos: Five Hundred (P500.00).**

For the purpose of clarifying certain issues, a pre-bid conference will be held on **February 10, 2006, 10:00 a.m.** at the BAC Conference Room, First Floor, Bldg. V at above address.

Applications for Eligibility and sealed bids shall be received by the PNOC-EDC Contracts Administration Group at PNOC-EDC, 1st Floor Building 5, Fort Bonifacio, Taguig, Metro Manila, **not later than 2:00 p.m. (Contracts Administration Group Office Wall Clock Time) of March 1, 2006** and shall be publicly opened immediately thereafter.

PNOC - EDC reserves the right to reject any or all bids or parts thereof, to waive any informality therein, to abort the bidding process, to accept such bids or to award any part of the work to any bidder whose bid is considered most advantageous to PNOC-EDC.

BAC CHAIRMAN

(PDI--Feb. 7, 2006)

Invitation to Apply for Eligibility and to Bid
Republic of the Philippines

1. PROPOSED TWO STOREY BUILDING AT GENERAL SANTOS CITY HOSPITAL, GENERAL SANTOS CITY
(Name of Project)

Partial construction of hospital building (payward) on approximately 60% of the total ground area of the project. Work activities includes concrete works, masonry works, plumbing works, electrical works and plastering, floor finishes, interior painting, soil poisoning, carpentry works, steel works and other miscellaneous items

2. CONSTRUCTION OF LEGISLATIVE BUILDING AT CITY HALL COMPOUND, GSC
(Name of Project)

Partial Construction of 2-storey building, ground floor slab, 2nd floor slab and roof deck slab area approximately 2,312.82 sq.m., work activities include soil poisoning, demolition of existing structures, excavation works for foundation, structural concrete (Tie Beams, Footings, Beams, Roof Beams, Concrete Slab 1st floor and 2nd floor), stairway and Railings, masonry works and plastering, Steel Trusses and Roofing Works, plumbing works, water lines, electrical works and other miscellaneous items

The Local Government Unit of General Santos City (LGU-GSC), through the Trust Fund – DOH intends to apply the sum of P9,713,397.69 being the Approved Budget for Contract (ABC) to payments under the contract for the PROPOSED TWO STOREY BUILDING AT GENERAL SANTOS CITY HOSPITAL, GENERAL SANTOS CITY and the 2001 Annual Budget and 2003 Supplemental Budget #3 intends to apply the sum of P20,919,417.01 being the Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) to payments under the contract for the CONSTRUCTION OF LEGISLATIVE BUILDING AT CITY HALL COMPOUND, GSC. Bids received in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected at Bid opening

The Local Government Unit of General Santos City (LGU-GSC) now calls for the submission of Letters of Intent (LOIs) from potential Bidders to apply for eligibility for the Proposed Two Storey Building at General Santos City Hospital and Construction of Legislative Building at City Hall Compound, all of General Santos City. Bidders should possess a valid PCAB license applicable to the above type and cost of the contract, have completed a similar contract with a value of at least fifty percent (50%) of the ABC, and meet the other minimum eligibility requirements stated in the Eligibility Documents. Interested Bidders must submit their LOIs on or before February 16, 2006, 2:00 PM at Bids and Awards Committee Office, 2nd Floor, Right Wing, City Hall Building, General Santos City and secure the Eligibility Documents therefrom. Applications for eligibility will be evaluated on a "pass/fail" basis. The last day for the submission of the accomplished Eligibility Documents shall be on the date of the opening of Eligibility Documents February 16, 2006, 2:00 PM at Bids and Awards Committee Office, 2nd Floor, Right Wing, City Hall Building, General Santos City. Only those Bidders passing the eligibility check will be entitled to purchase the Bidding Documents

Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations Part A (IRR-A) of Republic Act 9184 (R.A. 9184), otherwise known as the "Government Procurement Reform Act," and is restricted, unless otherwise stated, to organizations with at least seventy five percent (75%) interest or outstanding capital stock belonging to citizens of the Philippines. In accordance with the IRR-A of R.A. 9184, only Bids from eligible Bidders will be opened. In accordance with the IRR-A of R.A. 9184 a contract will only be awarded to the Lowest Calculated and Responsive Bidder who was determined as such during post-qualification

Interested Bidders shall submit their accomplished Eligibility Documents to the BAC Secretariat at Bids and Awards Committee Office, 2nd Floor, Right Wing, City Hall Building, General Santos City on or before February 16, 2006, 5:00 PM.

Interested Eligible Bidders may obtain further information from the Local Government of General Santos and inspect the Bidding Documents at the address given below from *8:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M.* on February 16 to 28, 2006.

A complete set of Bidding Documents may be purchased by Bidders that passed the eligibility check upon the presentation of the Notice of Eligibility to the BAC Secretariat at the address below and upon payment of a nonrefundable fee of P4,000.00 for the PROPOSED TWO STOREY BUILDING AT GENERAL SANTOS CITY HOSPITAL and P5,000.00 for the CONSTRUCTION OF LEGISLATIVE BUILDING AT CITY HALL COMPOUND. The Bidding Documents shall be received personally by the bidder or his authorized representative on or before February 24, 2006, 5:00 PM.

The Local Government Unit of General Santos City (LGU-GSC) will hold a Pre-Bid Conference open to all Eligible Bidders on February 28, 2006, 2:00 PM at the following address City Mayor's Conference Room, 2nd Floor, Right Wing, City Hall Building, General Santos City.

Eligible Bidders must submit their Bids at the address below on or before March 14, 2006, 2:00 PM. All Bids must be accompanied by a Bid security in the form of Cash, Certified Check, Cashier's Check, Manager's Check, bank draft or irrevocable letter of credit equivalent to One Percent (1%) of ABC or Bank Guarantee equivalent to One and a half Percent (1½%) of ABC or Surety Bond equivalent to Two and a half Percent of ABC or an equivalent amount in a freely convertible currency. Late Bids shall not be accepted. Bid opening shall be on March 14, 2006, 2:00 PM at the Bids and Awards Committee Office, 2nd Floor, Right Wing, City Hall Building, General Santos City. Bids will be opened in the presence of the Bidders' representatives who choose to attend at the address below at 2:00 PM, March 14, 2006

Completion of the Works is required by Two Hundred (200) Calendar days for Proposed Two Storey Building at General Santos City Hospital and Two Hundred Fifty (250) Calendar days for the Construction of Legislative Building at City Hall Compound, General Santos City.

The Local Government Unit of General Santos City (LGU-GSC) reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, to annul the bidding process, and to reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders

Bids and Awards Committee
Gina Y. Pigar
2nd Floor, Right Wing, City Hall Building, General Santos City
Tel. Nos. (083) 301-0553, (083) 301-3834
Fax (083) 301-0553
website address www.gensantos.gov.ph

(Sgd.) NAEL JOSEPH D. CRUSPERO
BAC Chairman

(PDI-Feb 7 & 14, 2006)

Republic of the Philippines
MANILA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT AUTHORITY
MIAA Administration Building, MIA Road Pasay City, Metro Manila

Invitation to Apply for Eligibility and to Bid

SUPPLY AND INSTALLATION OF FIRE ALARM COMPONENTS IN THE REHABILITATION AND UPGRADE OF FIRE ALARM DETECTION SYSTEM (FADS) AT TERMINAL 2 FIRE COMMAND

The *MANILA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT AUTHORITY (MIAA)*, through its *2005 Corporate Fund* intends to apply the sum of *Php3,787,856.00* being the Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) to payments under the contract for the *Supply and Installation of Fire Alarm Components in the Rehabilitation and Upgrade of Fire Alarm Detection System (FADS) at Terminal 2 Fire Command.* Bids received in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected at Bid opening

The MIAA invites Bids from eligible Bidders for the *Supply and Installation of Fire Alarm Components in the Rehabilitation and Upgrade of Fire Alarm Detection System (FADS) at Terminal 2 Fire Command.* Delivery of the goods shall be within ninety (90) working days after the receipt of the approved Contract. The description of an eligible Bidder is contained in the Bidding Documents, Instructions to Biders (ITB).

3 Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures, using non-discretionary pass/fail criteria as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations Part A (IRR-A) of Republic Act 9184, otherwise known as the "Government Procurement Reform Act," and is restricted to Filipino citizens/sole proprietorships, organizations with at least sixty percent (60%) interest or outstanding capital stock belonging to citizens of the Philippines and to citizens or organizations of a country the laws or regulations of which grant similar rights or privileges to Filipino citizens, pursuant to Republic Act 5183 (R.A. 5183) and subject to Commonwealth Act 138 (C.A. 138). Only Bids from Bidders who pass the eligibility check will be opened. The process for the eligibility check is described in Bidding Documents, ITB. The bidder with the Lowest Calculated Bid (LCB) shall advance to the post-qualification stage in order to finally determine responsiveness of the bid to technical and financial requirements of the project. The contract shall then awarded to the Lowest Calculated and Responsive Bidder (LCRB) who was determined as such during the post-qualification procedure.

4 Interested Bidders may obtain further information from *Office of the Secretariat, Bids and Awards Committee, MIAA* and inspect the Bidding Documents at the address given below from *8:00 AM to 5:00 PM.*

A complete set of Bidding Documents may be purchased by interested Bidders from the address below on *February 6-20, 2006* and upon payment of non-refundable fee in the amount of *Php4,242.40 (VAT Inclusive).* The method of payment will be *Cash or Managers/Cashiers Check (payable to Manila International Airport Authority).* The Bidding Documents shall be received personally by the prospective Bidder or his authorized representative.

The Bids and Awards Committee, MIAA will hold a Pre-bid Conference open to all interested parties on February 24, 2006, 9:00 AM at *Audio Visual Room, 4th Floor, MIAA Administration Building, MIA Road, Pasay City.*

Bids and eligibility requirements must be delivered to the address below on or before *March 10, 2006, 9:00 AM.* All Bids must be accompanied by a Bid security in the form of any of the following or an equivalent amount in a freely convertible currency:

a. CASH, CERTIFIED CHECK, CASHIER'S CHECK, MANAGER'S CHECK, BANK DRAFT OR IRREVOCABLE LETTER OF CREDIT one percent (1%) of the Approved Budget for the Contract.
b. BANK GUARANTEE – one and a half percent (1½%) of the Approved Budget for the Contract
c. SURETY BOND – two and a half percent (2½%) of the Approved Budget for the Contract, callable on demand, issued by the GSIS or by any reputable private insurance company, provided, that it is accompanied by the company's valid certificate of accreditation issued by the Insurance Commission (for private insurance company) and official receipt of payment of premium (GSIS and private insurance company).

Late Bids shall not be accepted.

6 Bid opening shall be on *March 10, 2006, 9:30 AM* at the *Audio Visual Room, 4th Floor, MIAA Administration Building, MIA Road, Pasay City.* Bids will be opened in the presence of the Bidders' representative who choose to attend at the stated address.

7. Minimum Eligibility Requirements of the prospective bidders:
a. Supplier must be Authorized in the Philippines
b. One (1) year warranty on labor and materials
c. Completion of ninety (90) working days

8 Prospective bidders should have experience in undertaking a similar project within the last two (2) years with an amount of at least 50% of the approved budget for the contract to be bid

9 The *MANILA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT AUTHORITY* reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, to annul the bidding process, and to reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders

Bids and Awards Committee
Joanne G. La Madrid
4th floor, MIAA Administration Bldg., MIA Road Pasay City
Trunk line: (02) 877-1109 loc. 3795
Fax No.: (02) 877-1801

(Sgd.) ATTY. OSCAR L. PARAS, JR.
Chairman, Bids and Awards Committee

(PDI-Feb 7 & 14, 2006)

Besieged Thaksin to ban protests near royal palace

THAKSIN AFP

CHIANG MAI, THAILAND—THAI Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra said on Monday he would not allow further demonstrations against him at the square near the royal palace in Bangkok where 40,000 people protested at the weekend.

Media tycoon Sondhi Limthongkul, who organized the biggest anti-government rally in 14 years, called for another one on Saturday in a bid to force Thaksin from office, but Thaksin said it would not be allowed near the palace.

"That's enough," Thaksin told reporters in the northern city of Chiang Mai. "They can't have it there anymore" because the square was just too near the palace, he said, citing traffic jams caused by the huge weekend gathering.

"You can have democracy, but within boundaries. It should be organized somewhere else," he said.

Sondhi, who began his campaign to oust former ally Thaksin last September, said he would discuss the issue with staff before deciding what to do in response.

"When he said 'No,' we can't resist, otherwise there would be clashes," Sondhi said.

Thaksin has shrugged off the calls to resign and used a speech to young footballers on Monday to hit back at his critics.

"Democracy is all about living in a society in harmony. A society where sports don't exist is full of those who don't play by the rules and those who are undisciplined," Thaksin said as he opened a youth soccer tournament in Chiang Mai.

The message was aimed at Sondhi and the opposition Democrat Party whom Thaksin accuses of using unconstitutional methods to try to overthrow a government that won a second landslide election victory just a year ago.

"We should be proud of a victory that comes from our own ability, but a victory that comes by exploiting others will haunt us," Thaksin said.

The speech was among a series of engagements Thaksin made in the northern city.

He smiled constantly despite facing the toughest political battle of his five-year premiership following his family's legally tax-free sale of the telecommunications empire he founded to Singapore state investment company Temasek.

Two cabinet ministers belonging to a rebellious faction of Thaksin's ruling party resigned in the wake of the $1.9 billion sale, one citing "political ethics." The weekend rally attracted many middle-class people in Bangkok upset by the sale.

Analysts said the chances of Thaksin stepping aside were remote with his backbone support in the countryside still strong and Thaksin brushed off the weekend demonstrators as "a few idiots." *Reuters*

ERRATUM

In the January 30 issue, Orchard Property Marketing Corporation congratulates its dedicated sales representatives for their hard work and excellent performance through a centerspread ad at the lifestyle section. However, we wish to correct the name of one of the Davao Mahogany awardees. Instead of Andrew Lepiten, the person on the photo was Ms. Emmalyn Aguilar. Ms. Aguilar is a Branch Manager from the Dreamweaver Division.

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Bed bugs hurting Australia tourism

SYDNEY—LEADERS of Australia's tourism industry will hold an urgent meeting Tuesday on how to battle a plague of bed bugs that is costing the sector millions of dollars.

The Queensland Tourism Industry Council called the meeting of hotel, motel and hostel associations after a study found a 1,000 percent rise in cases of bed bug infestations in Australia.

Sydney's Westmead Hospital Department of Medical Entomology estimated that the barrage of bloodsuckers was costing the accommodation industry up to 100 million ($75 million) dollars per year.

The hospital's Stephen Doggett linked the eruption to an influx of travelers from exotic destinations and species-specific poison to kill cockroaches in place of pesticides which act against a variety of pests, including bed bugs.

Doggett accused the hotel industry of playing down the bed bug problem for fear of scaring away tourists.

But Queensland Backpackers' Association chair Ralph Kajet, who will lead Tuesday's meeting, said the tourism sector was actively addressing the problem.

"We just thought the smartest thing to do was for us all to sit down and discuss those ideas and endeavor to come up with a coordinated approach," he told the national news agency AAP.

Bed bugs are small, brownish insects which feed on blood.

Doggett said the Australian outbreak was part of a worldwide rise in bed bug infestations. *AFP*

The Republic of the Philippines

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[illegible]	10-Feb-07	8.810%	7.53%
[illegible]	24-Feb-07	14.25%	7.61%
[illegible]	26-Feb-07	13.00%	7.62%
[illegible]	[illegible]	11.00%	7.64%
[illegible]	25-Mar-07	14.00%	7.66%
[illegible]	11-Apr-07	13.50%	7.69%
[illegible]	19-Apr-07	13.375%	7.70%
[illegible]	18-May-07	13.875%	7.73%
[illegible]	22-May-07	10.625%	7.75%
[illegible]	29-May-07	13.875%	7.77%
[illegible]	15-Jun-07	13.00%	7.80%
[illegible]	27-Jun-07	12.375%	7.82%
[illegible]	15-Jul-07	14.00%	7.84%
[illegible]	16-Jul-07	11.00%	7.85%
[illegible]	25-Jul-07	10.75%	7.86%
[illegible]	3-Aug-07	14.25%	7.88%
[illegible]	14-Aug-07	10.00%	7.90%
[illegible]	24-Aug-07	14.25%	7.91%
[illegible]	21-Sep-07	14.50%	7.97%
[illegible]	24-Oct-07	11.00%	8.02%
[illegible]	15-Nov-07	10.125%	8.07%
[illegible]	18-Nov-07	11.375%	8.08%
[illegible]	27-Nov-07	22.875%	8.09%
[illegible]	27-Nov-07	21.00%	8.09%
[illegible]	14-Dec-07	17.25%	8.13%
[illegible]	8-Jan-08	10.50%	8.17%
[illegible]	23-Jan-08	10.75%	8.20%
[illegible]	8-Feb-08	10.00%	8.23%
[illegible]	19-Feb-08	10.875%	8.25%
[illegible]	10-Mar-08	10.50%	8.27%
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[illegible]	26-May-08	10.00%	8.33%
[illegible]	2-Jun-08	9.75%	8.34%
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[illegible]	24-Jul-08	9.875%	8.38%
[illegible]	26-Jul-08	11.00%	8.39%
[illegible]	26-Aug-08	11.75%	8.41%
[illegible]	27-Aug-08	23.00%	8.41%
[illegible]	7-Oct-08	10.25%	8.43%
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WESTERN VISAYAS MEDICAL CENTER
Mandurriao, Iloilo City
Fax No. 321-17-97
E-mail address: wvmc@mozcom.com

Project Reference Number 06-001

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The DOH-Western Visayas Medical Center through its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), invites suppliers/manufacturers/distributors/contractors to apply for eligibility and to bid for the hereunder project.

Name of Project: Bidding of Hospital Supplies and Materials
Location: Western Visayas Medical Center

Brief Description

Description	Unit Price	ABC Total Price
Procurement of Hospital Supplies and Materials		Php 14,542,100.00

Approved Budget for the Contract: Php 14,542,100.00
Contract Duration: One Year
Delivery Period: Within 15 days after acceptance of Purchase Order

Prospective bidders should have experience in undertaking a similar project within the last two years with an amount of at least 50% of the proposed project for bidding. The Eligibility Check/ Screening as well as the Preliminary Examination of Bids shall, use non-discretionary "pass/ fail" criteria. Post-qualification of the lowest calculated bid shall be conducted.

All particulars relative to Eligibility Statement and Screening, Bid Security, Performance Security, Pre-bidding Conference, Evaluation of Bids, Post-Qualification and Award of Contract shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of R.A. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulation (IRR)

The complete schedule of activities is listed, as follows:

Activities	Schedule
1. Issuance of Bid Documents	February 1 – February 16, 2006
2. Pre-bid Conference	February 10, 2006 Friday
3. Submission of Letters of Intent and Application for Eligibility (if single-stage bidding is used, delete this activity)	
4. Opening of Bids	March 28, 2006 Tuesday
5. Bid Evaluation	March 1 – March 15, 2006
6. Post-qualification	March 16 – March 22, 2006
7. Notice of Award	March 28, 2006

Bid Documents will be available only to prospective bidders upon payment of a non-refundable amount of Php 2,500.00 to the DOH-Western Visayas Medical Center cashier.

The DOH Western Visayas Medical Center assumes no responsibility whatsoever to compensate or indemnify bidders for any expenses incurred in the preparation of the Bid.

Approved:
(Sgd.) ROMEO P. VARGAS, MD, FPCS
BAC Chairman

(PDI – February 7 & 14, 2006)

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Brains in USS Cole bombing bolts Yemen jail

SANAA—INTERPOL ISSUED A global security alert on Sunday over the escape of at least 13 convicted al-Qaida militants who tunneled their way out of a jail in Yemen, calling them a "clear and present danger to all countries."

The escapees included Jamal Badawi, mastermind of the bombing of the USS Cole in the Yemeni port of Aden in October 2000, which killed 17 US sailors. He was originally sentenced to death, but this was later commuted to 15 years in prison.

Another prominent escapee was Fawaz al-Rabe'ie, sentenced to death as leader of the group convicted of bombing the French oil tanker Limburg off the Yemeni coast in 2002, killing one crewman.

A security source in Yemen said the tunnel from which the men escaped was thought to be around 140 m long, twice as long as originally reported, and led to a mosque.

The source said authorities discovered the escape on Friday, but it was believed the prisoners had fled Thursday night and were definitely aided by more than one accomplice on the outside because the tunnel was believed to have been dug from the mosque to the prison.

The tunnel entry was in the women's section of the mosque, less frequented than the male section because women mainly pray at home.

The 13 militants were among 23 inmates who broke out of jail in the capital Sanaa in a major embarrassment for Yemeni authorities, who have cracked down on militants in the ancestral land of Osama bin Laden and positioned themselves as an ally of the United States in the war on terrorism.

A Yemeni state-run website (www.almotamar.net) said 17 of those who escaped were convicted of al-Qaida-linked crimes, while the other six were awaiting trial for similar charges.

Interpol on Sunday circulated a warning to its 184 member states over the missing prisoners and urged them to take extra precautions at their borders.

But two days after the escape was discovered, Interpol had not yet issued individual wanted notices for the fugitives because it said Yemeni authorities had yet to provide it with all the required information.

A government official said in the capital Sanaa:

"The interior ministry sent an official letter to Interpol with the names of the fugitives, their photographs and fingerprints. It asked them to circulate the list worldwide, fearing they might escape Yemen." *Reuters*

US triples spending to stop Iraq bombs

WASHINGTON—THE PENTAGON is tripling its spending to about $3.5 billion, on a newly expanded effort to combat the rising number of increasingly powerful homemade bombs that are the No. 1 killer of US troops in Iraq, The New York Times reported on its website on Sunday.

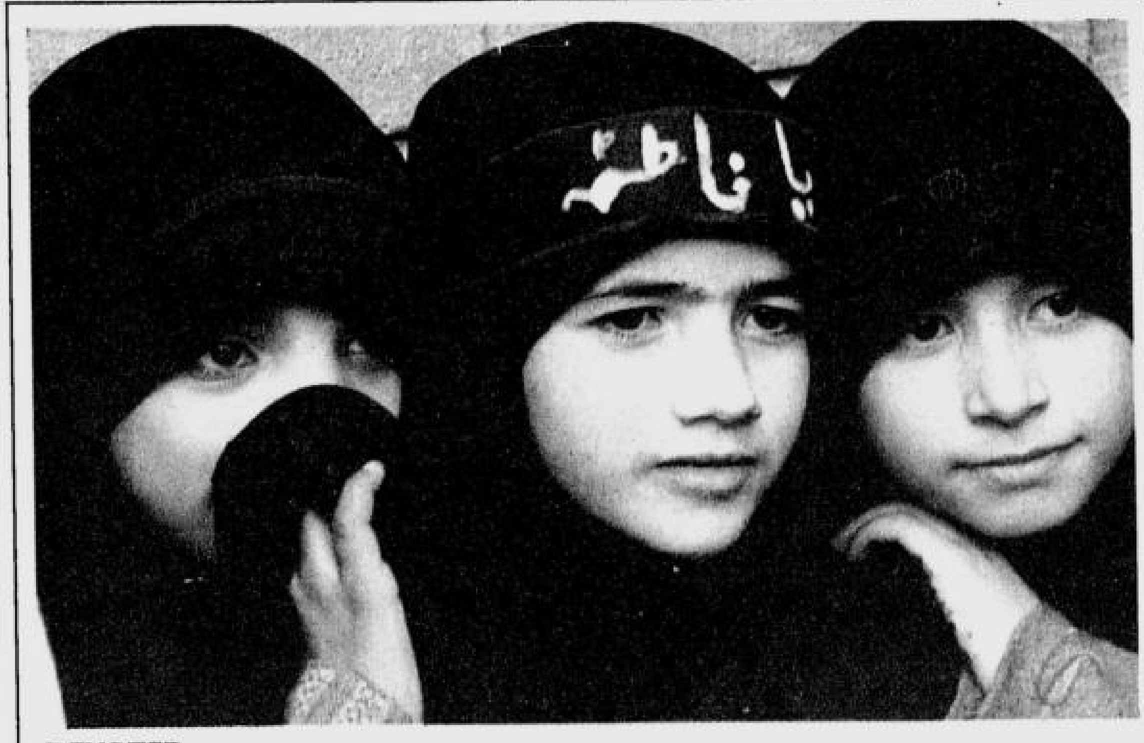
The move is a tacit acknowledgment that despite years of rising death tolls from the devices, the response has not been sufficiently focused or coordinated at the highest levels, the Times said.

Last year, 407 of the 846 Americans killed in Iraq were killed by the bombs, which are called improvised explosive devices (IEDs), the report said. The number of IEDs against allied and Iraqi forces and Iraqi civilians nearly doubled last year from 2004 to 10,593.

The intensified effort to combat the makeshift bombs, which at one time was led by a one-star general, was recently put under a retired four-star Army general, Montgomery Meigs, the Times said, citing interviews with a dozen military officials.

In the next few months, the defense department plans to double the number of technical, forensic and intelligence specialists assigned to the problem, to about 360 military service members and contractors in the United States and Iraq, the paper said.

Hundreds of other experts are being called in and new technology and training techniques are also quickly being pushed into service, The Times reported. *Reuters*



DEVOTED

Kashmiri Shiite Muslim girls watch the Ashura procession in Srinagar, India Feb. 5. On Ashura, Shiite Muslims commemorate the 7th century death of Imam Hussein, grandson of Prophet Muhammad. AP

Japan cons graying fast

TOKYO—THERE ARE STILL plenty of metal bars and handcuffs. But Japanese prisons these days have some new features—like wheelchair-friendly stair ramps, handrails in the bathrooms and nurses trained to spoon-feed inmates.

The aim is adapting prison life to a new kind of convict in Japan: The elderly one.

Like the wider society, Japan's prison population is rapidly aging, with the number of 60 years old and over inmates—more than half of them first-timers—tripling in the past decade and expected to rise even further.

Senior prisoners in 2004 numbered 7,381, up nearly 60 percent from 2000 and accounting for more than 11 percent of all inmates in Japan, the justice ministry says. In the US, prisoners aged 55 or older make up only 3 percent of inmates.

The trend is forcing Japan's 67 prisons to make changes to adjust to the new inmates.

"Overall, their movements are slow, they have to make a lot of effort to understand our simple instructions. It really takes up a lot of time," said Yusa, a correctional official at the justice ministry who wanted to be identified only by his family name. *AP*

Motorbike crashes killed more US soldiers than Afghan conflict

CAMP LEJEUNE, NORTH CAROLINA—More American troops have died on US roads in off-duty motorcycle accidents than have been killed fighting in Afghanistan since Sept. 11, 2001, safety records show.

Military commanders in North Carolina say the deaths are largely the result of boredom, bonus pay, and adrenalin to burn off after troops return from wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Nearly 350 troops have died on motorcycles since the 2001 terrorist attacks. That's compared to 259 killed while serving in Afghanistan.

Nearly 1,000 more troops have been injured on motorcycles.

Marine Lance Cpl. Mark Strickland, 24, was one of five Marines from Camp Lejeune who were involved in serious motorcycle crashes in October. Four of them had been home just a few weeks from combat in Iraq's deadly Anbar Province. Three of the Marines were killed and another lost a leg.

"When the doctor told me that he was dead, I told him that wasn't acceptable, it just wasn't acceptable," said Andrea Strickland, 22, the widow of Mark Strickland. "I said, 'He just got back from a war zone, and you're going to tell me that he died doing something he loved?'"

Lt. Gen. James F. Amos, commander of the Camp Lejeune-based II Marine Expeditionary Force described the crashes in October as "a cold shot to the heart" and ordered a crackdown.

The following month normal base operations were halted to focus on safety, particularly for motorcyclists.

Camp Lejeune also added safety programs and reemphasized existing ones. These include a mentor program Amos created that is being considered as a model for the entire Marine Corps. *AP*

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LUIS: Twas nice bumping in2 u kanina 'l

TRISH: Eh! nice seein u agen! Ayuz ang porma natin ha! Hehe

LUIS: Hehe. 1 yr? Tagal na!

TRISH: Actually almost 1 and a half na tayong d nagkkta. sori kailangan ko pang magmadali knina

LUIS: Mukha ngang ur busy e. so how r u? wat do u do na b?

TRISH: Sinabi mo pa. eto nga m on my way bak 2 qc 4 a mtng. I work as an accountant now. U?

LUIS: Wow galeng! ako dun pa din sa bank.

TRISH: Well u luk gud pag nakapo[illegible], hehe

LUIS: Act[illegible]ly u luk very pre[illegible] your dress kan[illegible] Layo frm the jea[illegible]hirts na suot mo [illegible] college...

TRISH: Naks, nambola pa! ukay lang 'tol Haha

LUIS: Hehe. Seriously though, you lukd pretty 'l

TRISH: y thank u mister 'l and tnx din sa pagdamay mo sa mahabang MRT ride na ito. Grabe trafic dito sa edsa!

LUIS: Tamang-tama, we hav lots of catching up 2 do.

TRISH: Naka-Globe Unlimitxt ka naman siguro gaya ko d b?

LUIS: Ako pa 'l! :) khit 2 sawa p tyo mag-txt! so teka, musta ka na nga? I mean, hows it been since you know?

TRISH: Since nun? Haha! Well, k naman ako. Umalis na ko sa dati kong apartment at lumipat na ako sa ortigas para work. Nakakapagod lang minsan mag-commute kasi laging siksikan

LUIS: E ba't di ka pahatid?

TRISH: Ha? Kanino?

LUIS: Sa boyfriend mo 'l

TRISH: Hello!?! Nwy, kaw, how are u? kaw ang magkwento. Ikaw ang nawala sa sirkulasyon ng college barkada e. lagi ka din nauubusan ng load nun eh.

[illegible]ehe, oo nga. [illegible] na ngyn noh. D[illegible] tlaga kelangan[illegible]kin ke tulungan [illegible]mily ko.

TRISH: Oh I c...

LUIS: Nwy, ano na[illegible]an ang ikukwento [illegible]?

TRISH: Ikaw! Musta na ang work, ang pagtugtog, lovelife, etc

LUIS: Ayun, k naman sa work. Promoted na ko! [illegible] trabaho ko at mga tao. Yup, I still play

TRISH: Uy, nice 2 hear dat! Congrats! Bilib naman ako sayo napagsasabay mo ang work at hobby mo.

LUIS: Mas mahirap kaya yang ginagawa mo na work! On-call ka lagi! I m sure nagbabadminton ka pa on weekends. Hinay-hinay lang

TRISH: Haha. Oo nga, nakakapagod, pero kelangan tlga eh. Teka, kayo pa rin ba ng banda nyo dati?

LUIS: Hindi na. bumalik sa school si Dan and si Mark is now active in the reggae scene. C James, ayun, spinning now and then sa malate. Txt txt pa rin kami ng mga yun kasi naka-unlimitxt din sila

TRISH: Teka, don't tell me solo artist ka na lang ngayon? HAHA

LUIS: OO! hehe, joke lang! 2 kami ngayon, sya yung vocalista, ako yung acoustic guitarist. Remember si Shane? Sya yun

TRISH: Oh si Shane...

LUIS: Yup. gnda tlga boses nun kya ginaganahan akong tumugtog pag kasama sya e. At we play our own songs na pala, di na covers, hehe

TRISH: E di ba crush mo si shane nung freshman pa tayo? Uyyyy...

LUIS: HAHAHA! Naaalala mo pa pala yun 'l

TRISH: Oo naman! Im sure close na kayo. Kayo na noh?

LUIS: HA? Hindi ako homewrecker! 2 yrs n kya sila ni Dan! 'l

TRISH: Si Dan? Yung [illegible]band mate [illegible].

LUIS: Y[illegible] Nag-session g[illegible] dati si Dan sa da[illegible] acoustic band n[illegible] Shane. Tapos yun- sila na.

TRISH: Ah ok. Uso talaga Acoustic noh? Dami na nagbago since you know

LUIS: actually trish, marami din nagbago sa akin...

TRISH: Oh talaga?! Haha

LUIS: Oo! Seriously, ang dami ko ke na-experience lalo na nung nwala papa ko. Sympre ako yung padre d pamilya nun...

TRISH: o nga. Prang bigla ka nag-mature din. Mas naging seryoso k p s studies lalo at dami mo din part-time job nun.

PALESTINIANS look at the wreckage of a car, one of two hit in an Israeli airstrike in Gaza City Feb. 5, which killed two of the Islamic Jihad's top militants. AP

Israel kills top Islamic Jihad explosives expert

GAZA—ISRAEL KILLED THE TOP bomb maker for Islamic Jihad and another gunman in an air raid in Gaza City on Sunday, security sources said, hours after an Israeli and three other militants died in a fresh surge of Middle East violence.

Witnesses said Israeli aircraft fired two missiles that blew up two vehicles, killing Adnan Bustan, 28, the head of Islamic Jihad's unit that produces rockets and explosives, and Jihad al-Sawafiri, 31, who led a rocket firing squad.

An Islamic Jihad official said Bustan was the group's most senior explosives expert and engineer.

Islamic Jihad had claimed responsibility for one of the worst recent rocket strikes from Gaza on Israel, in which three Israelis were wounded, including a baby, on Friday.

The group was quickly joined by other militants in vows to avenge the Israeli strike. "We will burn the ground and respond everywhere," said Abu Dujana, a spokesperson for Islamic Jihad.

Abu Qusai, a spokesperson for the Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades said: "Every Zionist, soldier and civilian, will be a target for our attacks."

Hundreds of angry supporters gathered outside a morgue where the bodies were taken and chanted: "Death to Israel, Death to America," as gunmen fired rifles into the air.

An Israeli Army spokesperson said "the air force attacked two vehicles in the northern Gaza Strip carrying Islamic Jihad terrorists who were responsible for projectile rocket attacks against Israel."

An Israeli security source said Bustan had also spearheaded rocket attacks by two other militant groups, the Al-Aqsa Brigades and Popular Resistance Committees.

Reuters

Palestinian coffers missing $700 million

GAZA CITY—ABOUT $700 MILLION has been pilfered from the Palestinian Authority coffers, an official inquiry showed Sunday, as Israel agreed to unblock funds it owes the Palestinian government.

The revelation came as three Palestinian militants were killed in the first deadly Israeli air strike on Gaza since Hamas' landslide victory in last month's general election while an elderly Israeli woman was killed when a Palestinian went on a knife rampage on a minibus near Tel Aviv.

News of the gaping hole in the Palestinian treasury was revealed by attorney general Ahmed al-Meghani at the end of an internal corruption inquiry.

"We are talking of a figure of around $700 million," Meghani told reporters in Gaza City, saying numerous indictments would be handed out in the coming days.

To date, police have arrested 25 people in connection with the inquiry while another 10 are on the run, he said.

Hamas' landslide victory in last month's election for the Palestinian legislature was partly based on its pledge to eradicate rampant corruption.

However, the result has further exacerbated the cash-strapped PA's financial crisis, with the United States and European Union threatening to cut funds unless Hamas commits itself to nonviolence and recognizes Israel's right to exist.

Israel initially froze tens of millions of dollars in customs duties which it owed the Palestinians, arguing that it wanted to screen the money to ensure it did not end up in the hands of "terrorists."

The government relaxed its stance on Sunday, agreeing to hand over a tranche of cash which should have been paid out on the first of the month, but officials vowed there would be no more transfers after Hamas forms the next Palestinian government.

"Not even a single shekel will be transferred while Hamas is in power," said Housing Minister Zeev Boim.

Both the European Union and United States have agreed to continue funding while a caretaker government continues to function.

Israel's deadly air strike, which killed three members of the radical Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades, drew sharp condemnation from Hamas, which immediately asserted the Palestinians' "right to self-defense."

"People have the right to defend themselves in the face of these acts by the occupation," top Hamas leader Ismail Haniya told AFP, delaying a planned trip to Cairo for several hours so he could attend the militants' funerals.

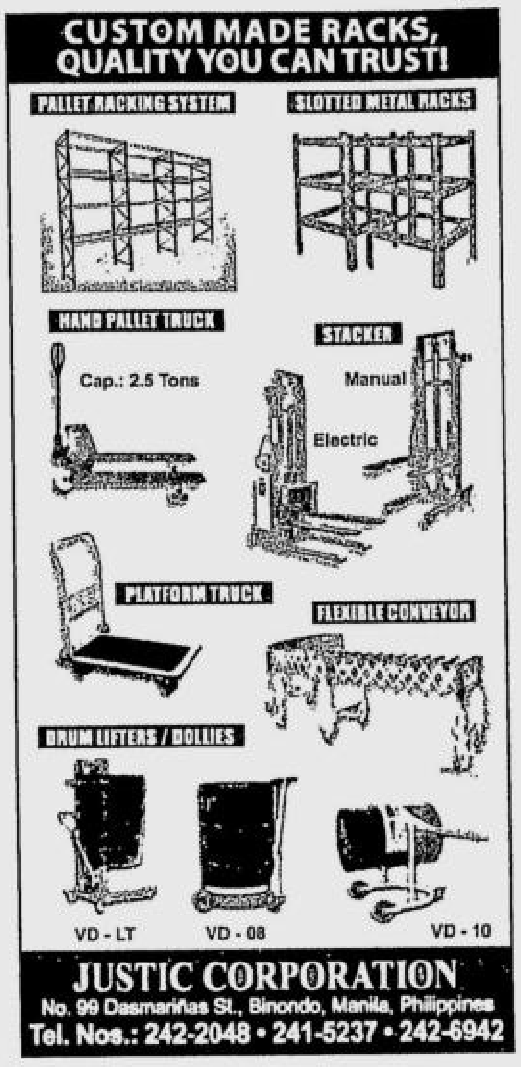
Israel said the raid, which targeted a building in Gaza City, was in response to a rocket attack Friday which injured four Israelis, including a baby.

In further violence, a knife-wielding Palestinian student killed an Israeli woman and injured five others on a minibus in Petah Tikva near Tel Aviv.

The unrest flared as Palestinian leader Mahmud Abbas visited Hamas' Gaza stronghold for talks with the Islamists about setting up a new government.

Abbas' spokesperson Nabil Abu Rudeina slammed Israel's raid on Gaza as "a dangerous escalation" at a time of crucial political change within Palestinian society.

AFP



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LUIS: sa kin kasi umasa c mama at mga kapatid ko diba? Kelangan pa nga nya pumunta sa Hong kong pra mgtrabaho.

TRISH: Hindi naman siguro ü everything is a learning process sabi nga nila di ba?

LUIS: And you know what I learned?

TRISH: What?

LUIS: That people come and go. But you should always keep that person who makes you laugh the hardest.

TRISH: Huy, ano ba yang nagyayari sayo? Parang I never knew you to be a sentimental person. Sino ka at anong ginawa mo kay Luis!

LUIS: HAHAHA. Hay...you always still do make me laugh the hardest

TRISH: E alam mo naman ako. Kasi naman, ang seryoso mo masyado

LUIS: Well trish, ive been wanting to say some things to you for the longest time. I hope you'll let me

TRISH: Luis, its ok. Past is past. Things [illegible]n't work out quite [illegible]or the 2 of us. [illegible] I look at it, tw[illegible] place at the [illegible]

LUIS: I know. [illegible] somehow I feel that you should know how sorry I am for what I did.

TRISH: Luis, remember what we always believed in?

LUIS: Yup. No regrets.

TRISH: Exactly. To be regretful of the past is to be ungrateful of what we have today.

LUIS: Like having this conversation?

TRISH: Exactly. We're enjoying this right. Everything that happened in the past lead us to this moment. Na pareho tayong masaya.

LUIS: I dunno what to say...

TRISH: Try, "ang ganda mo pa rin Trish" hahahaha!

LUIS: HAHAHA

TRISH: O ba't di mo sinabi? HAHAHA! For all its worth, my college years were most unforgettable

LUIS: Talaga? I didn't know that. Because of me?

TRISH: Oo na! because of us ü HAHAHA

LUIS: HAHAHA! Hay...

TRISH: What?

LUIS: Wala lang. I miss u...

LUIS: O ba't di ka na nagtxt back?

LUIS: Was it something that [illegible]id?

T[illegible]H: Hi ü wen[illegible] [illegible]e cab. Dito nako [illegible]ilding ng ka-[illegible]ng ko, guess [illegible]neeting moved to[illegible] That's another 30 [illegible]es! Hay...

LUIS: [illegible] ok. Well I guess I [illegible]ldn't be bothering [illegible]u. Baka kailangan [illegible]o pang [illegible]-relax before your [illegible]

TRISH: Ano ka ba? This is relaxation. Im having fun ryt nw. Besides, I miss you too ü

LUIS: You know what, I've never realized how fun of a friend you are

TRISH: Well, im surprised myself sa bagong Luis ü its nice actually

LUIS: Masyado tayong nagmadali nun e

TRISH: And wrong place at the wrong time

LUIS: Ü so Is Thursday, 7pm the right time?

TRISH: Huh? Para san?

LUIS: dinner? Coffee?

TRISH: HAHAHA! Libre mo ha! Ang yaman mo na siguro! Hehe. San?

LUIS: Sa restaurant kung san tayo ulit nagkita kanina

TRISH: Hmmm... right place.

TRISH: Tapos the usual ha!

LUIS: HAHAHA! Okay, fine, the usual...

TRISH: Yey! I miss fishballs

LUIS: Libre mo

TRISH: Oo ba!

LUIS: Hay... ü

TRISH: Ü

[illegible]IS: Ang ganda m[illegible]in Trish

TRISH[illegible] Hahaha! Joke [illegible] Why, tnx. That's sweet ü

LUIS: So pano kailangan ko ng bumalik sa office

TRISH: Ako din nandito na ka-meeting ko.

LUIS: Ok unlimitxt tayo ulit tomorrow k?

TRISH: Ha ha how about everyday?

LUIS: For good na ba? Jk.

TRISH: Well... i wouldn't mind.

LUIS: Text you tomorrow :-)

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OPINION

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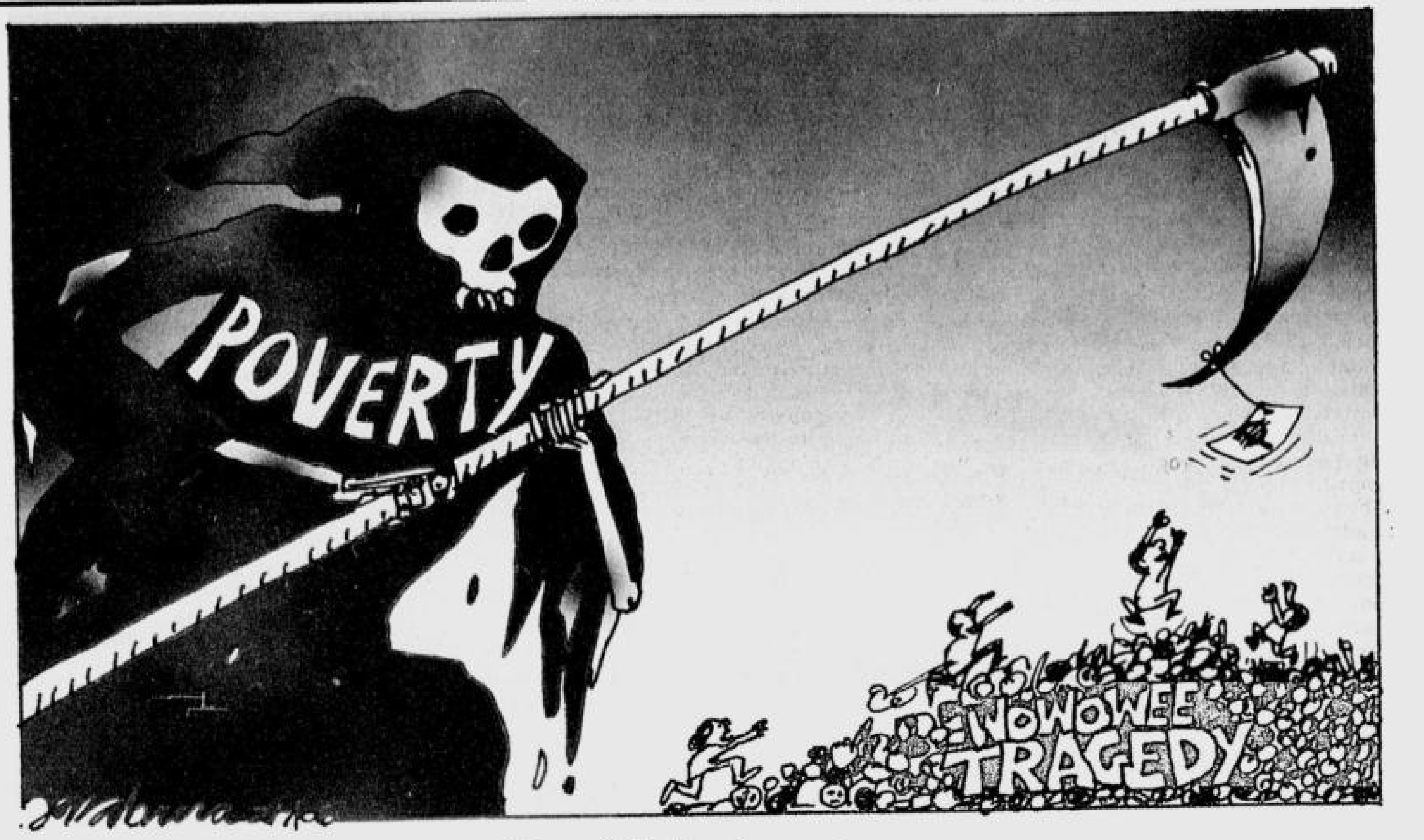


Helping the poor

EDITORIAL

WHEN YOU COME DOWN TO IT, POVERTY WAS the root cause of the "Wowowee" stampede that resulted in the death of 74 people last Saturday. It was hopeless, grinding poverty that made people line up at the PhilSports Arena as early as Monday, sleeping in their places and leaving only to answer the call of nature. It was poverty that made the people rush forward and knock down the gates that stood between them and a chance to win a house or P1 million in cash or two taxis or a jeepney and other prizes.

We already know what happened: 74 of them died and about 500 others were injured in the stampede. These were people who were so poor, so hopeless in life that they were ready to make "*kapit sa patalim*" (loosely translated, to go to any length to attain their goal). And ultimately and tragically, for many of them, their dreams of a better life did end in death.

Some people say that those who died may now be in a better state than those who survived. They may have a point there: the poorest of the poor have to suffer a living death every day.

The people who promoted the ill-starred show may not know it (but how could they not have known it?), but they were actually exploiting the poor to build higher ratings. Shows like "Wowowee" promote mendicancy, the fast-buck mentality instead of honest and hard work and perseverance. They dangle before poor people visions of instant wealth. They promote games of chance, instead of hard work, true grit and self-reliance, as the answer to their poverty.

Game shows offering big prizes in highly developed countries are staged mostly for their fun and entertainment value, although, of course, there is always the profit motive. But you do not see tens of thousands of people lining up and, in some cases, stampeding, to get a chance at winning the prizes. In our country, the situation of the poor people is so bad—and it is getting worse every year—that they will risk anything to lift themselves out of the mire of poverty.

But given the present state of the economy, what can poor people do to improve their lot? Some in the upper-lower classes still have some property like a carabao, a small lot or a tricycle, etc. that they can sell or mortgage, or they borrow money to pay for the fees required so they can work abroad. Some set up small retail enterprises. But what about those who really have nothing but the clothes on their backs and who live a hand-to-mouth existence?

The stories of some of the survivors who were interviewed on radio were truly heartbreaking. Some of them had not eaten for days and had only drunk water. Some had money only for transportation to the PhilSports stadium; they were apparently hoping that they would be lucky and win some of the minor cash prizes for their return home.

Many of those who went to the PhilSports stadium were unemployed or underemployed. The unemployment rate now stands at 7.4 percent. We are sure that many of those who flocked to the "Wowowee" show last Saturday would want to work but there are not many jobs open in our country. Or there are jobs open, but they require certain skills and knowledge that only a higher education and training can give. The challenge to the government and the private sector is not only to create more jobs but to give the masses better education so that they can obtain higher-paying positions.

The Chinese have a saying: "Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day. Teach a man to fish and you feed him for a lifetime." Let us stop abetting a culture of gambling and mendicancy. Let us stop promoting games of chance and instead teach the virtue of hard work. Let us correct the attitude of the poor of depending on the government for doles and handouts and instead instill in them the value of self-reliance. Let us help the poor help themselves by giving them better education, creating more job opportunities and opening credit facilities to them so that they can set up small enterprises.

'Red List' entry

VIEWPOINT

Juan L. Mercado

IN NOVEMBER 1998, SCIENTISTS STUMBLED across one of the world's rarest damselflies in forest remnants that dot the Cebu mountain range where President Ramon Magsaysay's DC-3 crashed 49 years ago. The miniscule population of this dappled insect (*risiocenmis*) with shimmering wings suddenly collapsed in 2001. Today, they're gone.

Over 301 species of dragon and damselflies flit about in Sibuyan, Negros, Panay, Masbate or Siquijor. The National Museum of Natural History in Leiden, the Netherlands, houses the Roland Müller Collection of Philippine dragonflies.

Nobody thought damselflies existed in Cebu—until University of San Carlos researchers found a handful, resting on fern leaf tips in a 30-meter strip along a Tabunan forest stream. USC's Teobaldo Borromeo bagged the insect with its striking elongated black abdomen with pale bluish streaks. But its color, wings, head shape, etc. differed from other species, recalled Dr. Franz Seidenschwarz, team leader. He sent specimens to "the world authority on damselflies here and in Thailand," University of Helsinki's Matti Hamalainen.

"The Cebu specimens differ distinctly from those of other islands," Hamalainen concluded. "(They're a) separate new species." Neither were they found elsewhere. The find "most likely is endemic to Cebu."

Cebu is severely denuded. So, these damselflies have "undoubtedly the most limited area to survive," the Helsinki zoologist added. "It may be one of the most vulnerable odonate species in the whole world."

Thus, he published the Cebu damselfly's description swiftly. A scientific name was urgently needed, he explained, if it were to appear in the "Red List" compiled by the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources.

For 40 years now, the "Red List" pinpointed for policymakers and scientists bearers of genetic diversity and building blocks of ecosystems threatened by extinction.

"The new species is named after Dr. Franz Seidenschwarz," he explained. "(This) recognizes his achievements in studying and restoring the last remaining virgin forests of Cebu." Thus, *risiocenmis seidenschwarzi* leapt into IUCN's "Red List."

Seidenschwarz has worked with researchers out of the USC for 18 years. He's married to a Filipina and speaks Cebuano fluently. In fact, one of his books is a Cebuano-German dictionary.

Scientific work, with Filipino colleagues, trying to restore Cebu's devastated ecology commanded international attention. In contrast, USC research is little known to Cebu officials fixated on politics.

USC's work first covered threatened birds and plants, endemic to Cebu. In 1992, the San Carlos team found in forest patches the Cebu flowerpecker (*dicaeum quadricolor*), long after ornithologists wrote it off as "extinct." Now, the few survivors rank among "the rarest bird species in the world." Cebu cinnamon is equally endangered.

In 1988, USC scientists focused on Kawasan Valley in Badian, Cebu. Tourist brochures peddle Kawasan as one of the nation's most beautiful waterfalls. For scientists, it's the "hottest biodiversity spot" in the country.

The team found the "Kawasan Mosquito Hawk" damselfly (*prostitica plicata*). The Kawasan paper kite butterfly (*idea leucone jumaloni*) is named after the renowned lepidopterist Julian Jumalon. "You can't find these in any other place in the world," Seidenschwarz notes. "Even in Cebu, they're found only in Badian."

Rare damselflies, algae and butterflies in Kawasan Valley are "examples of new discoveries," the team wrote. "We can not even tell how many kind of precious organisms exist, unless further studies are undertaken."

That forecast came true with the Tabunan damselfly findings. "This unique population remained quite steady until July 2000," ICUN notes.

Why did it collapse? Local farmers, raising cash crops like ampalaya, washed pesticide containers in the stream that time. Damselflies react quickly to pollution in springs. They're early warning systems.

Seidenschwarz photographed the last male damselfly sighted in March 2001. "It remains to be seen, whether the species is able to survive this catastrophe," ICUN says.

For three years now, USC scientists have pored over Tabunan aerial maps, looking for springs that cut through forest clumps where *risiocenmis* could breed. "No luck," says Seidenschwarz. "A species may be declared 'extinct' only 50 years after the last sighting. All we have are empty streams in a Tabunan forest that has stopped shrinking. It's expanding."

So, what's the big deal if a dragonfly or two disappear? No species disappears alone, notes Oxford University's Norman Myers. When a plant or animal slips into extinction, so do its unique genes. These are building blocks for life for future products, from medicine to food. Obliteration closes future options.

Less than one percent of tropical plants have been screened for medical uses. USC studies list 300-plus plants with medicinal properties in Cebu. Only one has been tapped commercially: marijuana. The Philippines is one of the world's five "hottest of the hot spots." More than half of the country's biodiversity wealth is found nowhere else. It's a world complex beyond understanding, valuable beyond measure.

"Glory be to God for dappled things," wrote Gerald Manley Hopkins, S.J. Our grandchildren are poorer by our decimation of these dappled insect with shimmering wings. And most of us elders, who should know better, are not even aware we've been further beggared.

* * *

E-mail: juan_mercado@pacific.net.ph

Scourge

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

MAJ. GEN. JOVITO PALPARAN REVELS IN BEING reviled by the enemy. Instead of bristling at being called names by Ang Bayan, the official organ of the Communist Party of the Philippines, he loves it. He considers being labeled a "butcher," a perpetrator of "death squads," "vigilantes" and "gruesome murders" a compliment.

He reasons: The insurgency is "more of a psychological war. The military effort is about 20-30 percent only." Crushing the NPA "in one to two years is more than enough because the enemy is not strong." "They are better than us on the propaganda front… We have to concentrate on combating their intelligence work and reducing their support system." "It is my belief that the members of the party lists in Congress are providing the day-to-day policies of the rebel movement." "NGOs infiltrated or directed by the Communist Party provide materials and shelter for the NPA."

How a near-caricature of a Cold War warrior has come to preside over this country's anti-insurgency operations, only the AFP can say. It is yet another proof that "military intelligence" is a contradiction in terms. At the very least, there's common sense to refute Palparan's logic. If the enemy is weak, why throw the kitchen sink at it? Why try to crush a weak enemy at all?

If Palparan had done his homework, he would know that over the last decade and a half, the fortunes of the communist movement have plunged steeply. Not least of the reasons for it is the "killing fields," which has sapped its moral ascendancy, something it enjoyed in decades past. The "killing fields" did not just turn away potential recruits, it turned away existing ones. I personally think it has done more to harm the communist movement image-wise than all the propaganda of the AFP combined. Living it down will prove far more protracted, or elusive, for that movement than victory.

The broader reason for it is the collapse of the Soviet Union and the fall of the Berlin Wall, which marked the collapse of the communist ideology. That is the reason the local communist movement is able to recruit now only from the *masa* and no longer from the campuses, which used to be the case before martial law. The communist ideology no longer has the power to inspire students to drop out and take to the hills. It's no longer heroic, it's just suicidal.

The drawing power of the NPA today is pretty much poverty. Grinding, stark, abject poverty. People join it out of desperation. People join it because they have nothing to lose and not because they have something to gain. Why would you want to slaughter people who are fighting to have something to eat? That is precisely the question the Oakwood mutineers asked themselves at one point. Or so they told me. They looked at the face of the enemy and asked themselves why they would want to shoot people who are fighting just to be able to live. They looked at the face of the enemy, and saw themselves.

If Palparan had done his homework, he would have known that the communist movement split up a long time ago into two groups, and has since been engaged in fratricidal war. At least one group has waged a murderous war on the other, targeting its leaders with regularity. Do you need intelligence, military or plain, to see that if your enemy is disunited your best strategy is merely to fuel the dissension? It's cheaper in terms of lives and bullets, and more effective.

Had Palparan done his homework, he would have known that most of the NGO and party-list representatives he accuses of providing the day-to-day policies of the NPA and/or offering them aid and comfort are the ones who have broken away from the communist movement and are seeking their own paths. Those paths remain in the mold of "serve the people" even if they no longer do so in the Marxist one. Indeed, had Palparan done his homework, or read a bit of history, he would have known that preventing even bona-fide, dyed-in-the-wool, card-carrying, communists from taking the parliamentary path does not weaken revolution, it strengthens it. In 1946, the Roxas government expelled six former Huks who had won seats in Congress during the elections. They went back to the hills and birthed a serious insurgency against the government.

But in the end, I do not particularly care that Palparan is ignorant about these things. I do care that his ignorance is producing murderous consequences. What is this, just kill Bayan Muna people wholesale because they must be guilty of something? What is this, just harass or murder NGO and party-list people, and say the innocent are collateral damage? What is this, just unleash the scythe of death on everyone who has had dealings with the communist movement, whether sympathizer or member, whether heretic or believer, whether retired or active? I do not particularly mind the politics of the dead, I do mind that they are dead.

At least the deaths of the provincial journalists are being loudly condemned, even if they're not being solved. The deaths of the members of Bayan Muna and other groups are not. There's a terrifying silence over them, as though they're fair game and their disappearance from the face of the earth is par for the course. The thinking seems to be: "The victims are not you and me, they're 'other people,' their fate cannot befall me." Well, think again. With anti-terrorism being the twin of anti-communism, and with Palparan to prosecute these things, Bertolt Brecht's aphorism looms prophetically: First they took away my neighbor for being a Jew, and I said nothing. Then they took away another neighbor for being a communist, and I said nothing. Now they're taking me away, and I can say nothing.

Palparan says he's out there to end a scourge. Look at what he's doing and ask who, or what, a real scourge is.

Timely visit of India's president

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

THE VISIT OF PRESIDENT KALAM OF INDIA IS very timely as our nation is again caught up in a new controversy, this time over the recent stampede at the PhilSports Arena (formerly Ultra) that killed 74 people and injured over 400. Kalam outlined in a 45-minute speech before the joint session of Congress yesterday the program of action that has enabled India to begin winning the war against poverty. Of India's one billion people, 260 million, or a little over 25 percent, live below the poverty line, while many millions more are "at the borderline." But poverty is being addressed through a wide-ranging program that includes the development of the rural countryside, such as through the planting of Jatropha for diesel fuel, the strengthening of its information technology industry and lowering the prices of medicines for the masses. Kalam said that India's GDP has to grow by 10 percent for a decade if the lives of its teeming masses are to be improved. Today, India is classified with Brazil, Russia and China as the fastest-growing economies of the world.

* * *

By contrast, the program of action against poverty in the Philippines seems to be dominated by the opposition's predilection for blaming the administration. For instance, instead of looking at the PhilSports Arena tragedy as an opportunity to cooperate and move the country forward, Anakpawis Rep. Crispin Beltran quickly blamed the administration, asserting that it is "grossly incapable of giving our workers jobs, our peasants land to till and our urban poor the chances for sustainable livelihood." Beltran seems to forget that for many years, his Kilusang Mayo Uno has contributed immensely to the joblessness of many of our countrymen because of its propensity to stage strikes even when its legal basis for doing so is open to challenge. As a result, some foreign companies have stayed away or stopped expanding, with a number of them closing shop and going elsewhere.

* * *

If we have to look squarely at the problem of poverty, I think the accusing finger ought to point at various sectors. The administration has failed to crack down on graft and corruption especially in customs, thus opening itself up to more debilitating attacks that set back economic recovery. On the other hand, Congress is gridlocked over many bills that could uplift our countryside. For instance, when President Kalam spoke about how millions of hectares in India have been planted to Jatropha for diesel fuel, it brought to mind our government's plan to go big on coco diesel as one alternative fuel. Developing coco diesel, however, is very much dependent on research and a support structure for the coconut industry, but this has been rendered inutile by moves of Eduardo Cojuangco's group to block the use, even just the interest of a portion of the P130-billion coco levy funds for this purpose. In the meantime, the majority of our over three million coconut farmers and their families remain dirt poor and their areas remain NPA-infested.

* * *

As Kalam spoke about the planting of Jatropha on a huge scale in India, my mind raced back to the billion trees bill, passed by the House but pending, like so many other bills, in the Senate, and how it could generate so much employment. And what about the bill creating a housing authority that could build three million houses, decongesting Metro Manila and triggering a ripple effect on the economy through 60 allied industries? It also lies dormant in the Senate. On the other hand, the Church and the rich classes continue to pay lip service to a truly meaningful poverty alleviation program. And what about the giant network that caused the tragedy because of its mindless race for top ratings, neglecting elementary security measures and crowd control as well as the time-honored values of hard work and perseverance, which are antidotes to poverty?

* * *

Senators have alleged that many millions in fertilizer funds were channeled to President Macapagal-Arroyo's supporters in the last elections, as a way of getting them to work for her candidacy. Names of members of the House of Representatives have surfaced in the media as alleged recipients of fertilizer funds released between March and April of 2004, just weeks before the May 2004 elections. House members quickly denied the allegations, saying these are part of a demolition job against identified GMA supporters. They also say that a number of senators were recipients themselves. The veracity of the allegations, however, can be easily verified from the Commission on Audit, which should speak out and issue the list of the recipients in the interest of truth.

* * *

I note that Bacolod City Rep. Monico Puentevella was reportedly among those who received the funds, a charge that he has stoutly denied. He has challenged his accusers to present proof. There's something that I have personal knowledge of in this regard. In April of 2004, I accompanied my husband to Bacolod where he joined his classmates from Negros Occidental High School's Class '54 for their golden jubilee celebration. On the NOHS campus we ran into Puentevella, who was then campaigning for reelection against NPC candidate John Orolla. In a corner of the library, he related to us with tears in his eyes how badly he felt that GMA was not supporting him (she stayed neutral in the congressional fight, perhaps in deference to some of her friends who supported Orola). Puentevella couldn't hide his bitterness, but he vowed to work very hard to overcome his disadvantage. But GMA made it up to him, for a month later, I heard she went to Bacolod to administer the oath only to Puentevella and no other winner. If GMA did not support him, it's logical to assume he didn't get a cent of the fertilizer fund.

They were invited

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

OF COURSE, ANYTHING SAID AT THIS POINT about the stampede at the Philsports Arena would be hindsight, wisdom gained in the afterthought, reactive and reflexive. But some things that are being said and done in the wake of the tragedy are just too disturbing to let pass.

First, of course, this is an event that "no one wanted to happen," as Willie Revillame, host of "Wowowee," kept saying in the hours and days after 74 people died early Saturday morning. It's not as if Revillame, the production staff of "Wowowee," or even the top management of ABS-CBN, had sat around and plotted to squeeze thousands of hopeful spectators into a sloping driveway that stopped at steel gates and barricades—a deadly funnel that virtually guaranteed injuries and fatalities.

It would be hindsight to say today that the ABS-CBN people should have realized that such a layout was a recipe for disaster. But the arena (which used to be called Ultra) management, I'm sure, was well aware of the conditions the crowds would be facing. This is not the first such stampede at the arena, nor the first deaths from a frantic crowd.

But was ABS-CBN "caught by surprise" at the throng that had gathered in Pasig for the first anniversary show of "Wowowee"? Long before this, "Magandang Umaga Pilipinas," Channel 2's early morning show, had been airing aerial footage of the area around the station's audience entrance, showing the kilometer-long queues of people desperate to enter the noontime game show.

A friend recalls an episode on Korina Sanchez's show featuring people lining up for "Wowowee," even profiling a couple who divided their working day between a cotton candy vending business and queuing at the station. And of course, Revillame had been touting the first anniversary special and its heavy load of prizes for days on end on the show itself.

* * *

WHAT I'm trying to say is that those folk were invited to the PhilSports Arena. They didn't just happen to be there. ABS-CBN wanted a spectacular crowd inside and outside the arena, and that is what they got.

So it's only right—and obligatory—for the giant network to say they would pay for the funeral and burial services of those who died in the crush, and for the hundreds more injured.

Revillame has said he would spend much of this week making the rounds and paying his respects to the families of the deceased. It is an admirable decision, but it is the least he can do for his fans, or as the network talents now refer to viewers, their "*kapamilya*" or family members.

As the "face" of "Wowowee," the personality whose charisma drew both the live and television audiences, Revillame owes it to the bereft to show some humanity and empathy. I was truly touched when he said on TV that the biggest thing that hit him when he dropped by a funeral parlor preparing the remains of the victims were the familiar faces, especially of the senior citizens, who had been regulars at the studio. This made sense, since as devotees they would have been in front of the line, the most vulnerable to a stampede. So even as just an "old" friend, it is Revillame's social obligation to comfort those orphaned as a result of his "invitation."

* * *

I HAD been wondering what ABS-CBN management's decision would be regarding the airing of "Wowowee," so I was heartened to see yesterday that instead of the frenetic game show, the station decided to air "Alay sa Kapamilya," news footage and commentary interspersed with inspirational song performances. I understand "Alay" will air for a week, while Revillame does his rounds, but I expect "Wowowee" will be back on air after that, or whenever the station bosses feel the air has cleared and it can go about its usual business.

Certainly dismaying was the footage aired on "Alay sa Kapamilya" showing that even after they announced that "Wowowee" would not be airing, a long line of hopefuls had still gathered at the audience entrance, with many eyeing the prizes that would have been given away last Saturday.

Many among the ABS-CBN talents, led by Revillame, have sought to mitigate their guilt by saying that the people behind the show were only motivated by a desire to "help the poor," to hand out a measure of hope and alleviate the people's dreary lives by promising a windfall, from a few thousands to a house-and-lot worth more than a million pesos.

But let's be blunt about it. Greed lay behind the tragedy. For the crowd, it was greed born of desperation, greed for "easy" money, for the lucky draw, or, failing that, the chance to be seen on TV and hug their favorite celebrity.

* * *

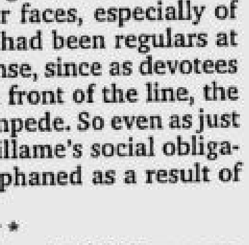
BUT even as one understands and even sympathizes with such greed—hunger and poverty can provoke extreme behavior—I have less sympathy for the kind of commercial greed that lay behind "Wowowee."

Facing a competitor which had ruled the time slot for decades, and against which it had mounted show after show, only to fail miserably in the ratings, ABS-CBN conceptualized "Wowowee" which was a game show only in name, as Revillame himself confessed, and instead relied on drawing an audience—and the ratings—by throwing money at people. Tina Monzon Palma, replying to a question about the station fostering a "mendicant" mentality among its audience, parried it by saying NGOs were also among the show's beneficiaries.

But whether benefiting individuals or organizations, shows like "Wowowee" show us how dangerous— and profitable—they can be. We all subscribe to the adage that says, "Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day, teach him how to fish and you feed him for life." And yet it's fairly obvious that given a choice between fish and fishing skills, people will always go for the easy money. And it's easy money that brings in the ratings.

The 'Ilustrado' as Filipino

SENSE AND SENSIBILITY



Bambi L. Harper

SOME OF MANILA'S LESSER KNOWN DELIGHTS —and something to look forward to—are book launches of Alfredo Roces' works. The size of his latest work, "Adios Patria Adorada: the Filipino as Ilustrado, the Ilustrado as Filipino," is just about right, making it convenient to tote anywhere, unlike his previous one that's so huge it lies entombed on the coffee table and has to be read standing up just like the Oxford Dictionary.

It is also a pleasure seeing friends you meet infrequently, beginning with the author himself and his muse, the lovely Irene, as he describes her. There is also the stellar cast of speakers like Frankie Jose whose self-deprecatory remarks about his bald pate resulted in focusing attention on sundry Roces kin's shiny domes. But Frankie had a further interesting point to make with regard to the book which perhaps may intrigue you enough to read it. And this is whether the *Ilustrados* sincerely wanted independence for the good of the country or they wanted it so that they could take over the colonizer's role. Did they collaborate first with the Spaniards, then with the Americans, then the Japanese and finally with the powers-that-be to fulfill this ambition? And is this the reason the country is in the mess it's in now?

Roces' premise is that it was the *Ilustrados*—Rizal, Luna, Paterno, Mabini, Del Pilar, Sanciangco, et al.—who "invented" the Filipino national identity. That this identity was born in the 19th century, forged out of painful experiences at home and flowered in Europe leading eventually to the 1996 Revolution. The quintessential *Ilustrado* is and remains Jose Rizal.

The author explains that he wanted to tell an unbiased story, to set the record straight to balance the versions of the post-World War II historians who present the *Ilustrado* as "villains" who "betrayed the masses" and who lacked "radical commitment and populist ideology." Rather than viewing the *Ilustrados* and their world from a 20th-century "proletarian ideology and a rigid class struggle" interpretation, Roces tries to assess political dynamics through "traditional kinship politics." His focus is on the conflict within the "principalia class" because, believe it or not, we were already quarreling among ourselves even then and whoever said heroes couldn't be petty? The author calls it "that fatal inclination to create factions over personalities rather than ideas." (Need we mention Estrada or Poe or any of our celebrities who ran for public office?)

The narrative moves from the end of the Galleon Trade that marked the beginning of economic self-reliance for this Spanish colony to a brief foray (one chapter) into the granting of our independence. The bulk of the book is devoted to the 19th century and the conditions that led to the formation of the Filipino. The word "Filipino" at first referred to Spaniards born in the Philippines. Later it included *mestizos*, both Chinese and European, and finally, it encompassed the poor *Indio* (metamorphosed into the "noble survivors of some lost Eden") who then as now remain at the bottom of the pecking order.

There were then among members of the Propaganda Movement the *mestizo-Indio* nationalists and the creole patriots (composed of assimilationist *hijos del pais*). The former wanted something like a Philippines for Filipinos, while the latter were for equal rights as Spanish citizens. It was the separatists whose logic would influence those who would later claim that Bonifacio, and not Rizal, should be the National Hero because Rizal was "an elitist—and a pacifist to boot who wrote in Spanish and openly expressed qualms about the success of a revolution by the Katipunan." Yet, even among them there was no avoiding the usual crab mentality.

With regard to the major characters that peopled this 19th-century stage, Roces gives brief sketches of their backgrounds. For those unfamiliar with these historical players, the information is both interesting and useful. Roces is kinder in his assessments than Nick Joaquin and his disillusioned "A Question of Heroes." While Luna and Hidalgo were the first to challenge and win against what was then perceived to be Spanish superiority in the visual arts, it was Rizal who proved that a masterful novel in Castilian could be written by a Filipino.

Events, human conflicts and their results are analyzed to highlight the development of a sense of nationhood and the creation of the Filipino. Behind the scenes analyses of the Propaganda Movement, La Liga Filipina, the problems with publications like La Solidaridad and España en Filipinas showcase the weakness of our psyche (always the particular never the whole; the personal rather than the general), the lack of unity, the petty intrigues and jealousies. Even without stating the similarity, the reader can conclude that present-day problems that bedevil the country have their roots in our incapacity to transcend the ego.

De La Salle Press officials claim that they generally sell only 500 copies of their publications. Considering their student body, this is a rather depressing figure. But even worse is the thought that so few would have a chance to understand the *Ilustrado* and his real contribution to this country.

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Comments at bambiharper@yahoo.com

Who will clean up the mess you left?

YOUNG BLOOD

Jose Miguel V. Bermudez

We want to know what the young are thinking about. What are their thoughts on current issues? We welcome contributions from the twentysomething and below.—Ed.

MY GENERATION IS ADMITTEDLY A CONFUSED LOT, BUT it is not our fault. At home and in school, we are taught not to lie, cheat or steal. If I were to be caught cheating in my school exams, I would be expelled. If my father caught me lying, I would lose an entire week's allowance and I would be grounded for at least a month. If the barangay tanods caught me stealing, I would be put in jail. All this seems to be only fair, but I do not see the same standards being applied to older people, including those whose salaries come from taxes paid by my hard-working parents.

President Macapagal-Arroyo has been accused of lying, cheating and stealing. And I have heard many people speak in her defense. Let me enumerate the three arguments put forward by her defenders. Firstly, they say, she should not leave office because she is presumed innocent until proven guilty after due process. Secondly, she did nothing wrong when she talked to an election official; in fact, all the suspicious remarks made during their conversation, such as those pertaining to kidnapping, vote padding and vote manipulation, were mouthed by the election official, not her. Thirdly, granted she is guilty, she remains our best option at the moment.

The President should not leave office because she should be presumed innocent until proven guilty? But aren't we reducing a moral issue to a purely legal one? The law may be useful in establishing people's legal rights and responsibilities, but it can not dictate the basis of human relations, especially where trust and confidence are concerned.

My parents have taught me that trust is earned and must be continuously earned. I trust my parents not because the law says I should, but because they have not done anything to make me distrust them.

Besides, there are truths that stare one in the face and there are truths that are like needles buried in the haystack. The presumption of innocence is useful in cases where the truth lies buried. Where the truth is as patent as the sun rising in the east, must we still presume otherwise? If my girlfriend catches me passionately kissing another girl, I can demand that she give me due process before being punished, but I cannot demand that she continue to trust me.

One highly respected businessman, whose autobiography I have read, says that leaders ought to follow a standard much higher than the one applied to their followers. If he is caught by shareholders doing something inimical to his company, the only honorable thing for him to do is to resign. After resigning, he can demand that due process be followed in determining what punishment he should be given.

This business leader says that setting a higher standard for leaders is only fair because they are very powerful, unlike their subordinates who have nothing else but due process to protect them against abusive leaders. Leaders caught with their hands in the cookie jar can no longer lead because they have lost their moral ascendancy. Elsewhere I read that the Romans applied a similar higher standard to the conduct of Caesar's wife.

The President did nothing wrong in talking to an election official and all the suggestions about illegal activities were made by the latter? So why didn't the President say anything to stop him? Wasn't she horrified that an election commissioner appointed by her was planning to do something illegal? If she called him only to protect her votes, did it not occur to her that this official could not be trusted since he was talking about manipulating the results?

My teachers in religion and ethics tell me there are sins of omission as well as of commission. I am sure that if my father heard me say that I intend to cheat in my school exams, he would not let that remark pass without threatening me with the most terrifying punishment if ever I carried it out.

The President is our best option and she represents the lesser evil? None of my teachers ever gave me the notion that evil is fine as long as it is the lesser evil. According to them, evil is evil and we should never compromise on it. If our best available option is someone who lied, cheated and stole, we are doomed. Does this mean that no one among the 80 million Filipinos today is good enough to lead this country? What if, heaven forbid, something tragic happens to our "best option" at present? Will we have to import Lee Kuan Yew or Thaksin Shinawatra because no one among us Filipinos is good enough to run this country?

Every day of my life, my teachers and my parents admonish me to shape up. I think it is now my generation's turn to tell my parents and those who run this country that it is time for them to shape up. They are being selfish and myopic when they complain about the inconvenience and disruption caused by people protesting against lying, cheating and stealing. They would rather go about their regular business even if that means leaving many fundamental and moral issues unresolved.

Like a ghost that was momentarily driven away, today's moral issues will come back to haunt us. Guess who will be left to deal with this ghost when it returns? Guess who will be left to deal with the ugly litter of an irresponsible and apathetic generation that would trade their children's future for short-term convenience? Guess who will have to painfully sort out the moral confusion wrought upon them by their elders who practice a double standard?

Jose Miguel V. Bermudez, 17, is a first year BS Education student at the Southville International School in Las Piñas City.

NOTICE TO YOUNGBLOOD CONTRIBUTORS:

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Dancing with the President

IN HIS LETTER TO THE EDITOR (PDI 1/23/06), Rolando Q. Estrada, who seems to be a well-educated person, having done research fellowship in Germany and studied Canadian politics, wrote that he would rather dance with the "devil I know" (meaning Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo) than with the "tired and old faces" of the Marcos regime, Edsa II and the opposition allied with Joma Sison.

If Estrada had been given eternal life, probably in a pact with the devil like Dr. Faustus, he would have urged Jesus to yield to the devil's temptation at the top of the mountain; danced with the Pharaoh as a Jewish slave rather than join Moses in crossing the Red Sea to freedom; sang with Nero and Caligula while they burned Christians at the Roman Forum; rollicked with Torquemada to the cries of the thousands he had tortured and murdered during the Inquisition; waltzed with King George as he tried to suppress the American revolution; partied with Marie Antoinette and King Louis XVI while the French people starved and rose in revolution; acclaimed our Spanish rulers in executing Rizal and fighting Bonifacio; hailed Hitler, saluted Mussolini and applauded Tojo during their fascist reign and initial victories in World War II; and danced the samba with Pinochet, the tango with Ferdie and Imelda, as he would dance the Cha-cha with GMA.

You don't dance with the devil—any devil. You overthrow or defy him or her. People who are oppressed, who are victimized by injustice and exploitation, who are deceived, have a right and a duty to overthrow their oppressors and deceivers, if not for their own sake, for the sake of their children and future generations. What if the slaves of the American south had sided with the devils they knew—their masters—and not joined the anti-slavery forces of the North during the American civil war?

Progress—social, political and economic—comes with change. We should not be afraid of change from bad conditions. Things may be worse in the short run, but they would be better in the long run. That is the verdict of history.

—MANUEL F. ALMARIO,
mfalmario@yahoo.com

Against GMA, Drilon has more to lose than gain

AMANDO DORONILA OBVIOUSly made some biased observations on the stand of the Liberal Party asking President Macapagal-Arroyo to resign. (PDI, 1/30/06)

The LP position was approved by the majority of the members of its directorate. The party, as a democratic organization, adheres to the majority rule. However, based on its liberal democratic principles, the LP also allows its individual members to express and hold on to their dissent as a matter of conscience. Thus, the party maintains unity in diversity.

The LP Manila chapter's celebration of the party's 60th anniversary, held separately from that of the LP national committee, did not mean that the party is divided by factionalism, as Doronila suggested. The LP Manila Chapter celebration was like any of the local LP celebrations held in other cities and provinces.

The party decision to ask Ms Arroyo to resign was based on what it considered the best interest of the country. Senate President Franklin Drilon agreed with the decision, which jibes with the popular sentiment as shown by a survey indicating that about 80 percent of the Filipinos want GMA to step down. The polls also show that Drilon, incumbent LP president, has the highest positive net approval rating among legislative leaders.

Doronila noted that some LP leaders have conflicting ambitions for the presidency. This is normal in any political party and that is why there are party conventions to resolve such issues. The LP is proud that it has many leaders who are qualified to be president. It considers Doronila's observation—that the LP leadership is "top heavy"—as a compliment.

Doronila presumes a personal motive on the part of Drilon for supporting the party decision. Should Drilon disregard his principles and belief and just sit on the fence on the ground that his motives might be questioned, because under the Constitution he is third in the line of presidential succession? This would be abandonment of his duty and betrayal of his conscience.

Doronila also claims that Drilon's hold on the Senate presidency has become "precarious." This is a baseless assumption. The Senate president continues to enjoy the support and confidence of the majority of the members of the Senate, including those who are with the administration party.

Drilon has more to gain in siding with the President just like the other politicians who support her regardless of the convincing evidence of massive election cheating, unbridled corruption and consistent lying that have characterized her administration. In asking the President to resign, in accordance with his party's decision, the Senate president has courageously laid his political career on the line.

—ANTONIO A. GALLARDO,
chief of staff,
Office of the Senate President,
6/F Senate of the Philippines,
GSIS Building,
Financial Center, Pasay City

SSS still studying proposed EPCIB-BDO merger

THIS IS IN REFERENCE TO THE letter of Amado Cabaero (PDI, 1/23/06) on the proposal of Banco de Oro (BDO) Universal Bank to merge with Equitable PCIBank (EPCIB). The Social Security System (SSS) has a substantial stake in EPCIB.

Cabaero said: "It is ironic that Winston Garcia, president of the Government Service Insurance System, which has only a little over one million members, should be the one to stand up for and protect the interest of SSS members, by appealing to the SSS to join the GSIS in connection with BDO's bid to merge with EPCIB. The SSS' and GSIS' combined shareholdings would certainly be able to command a good price. Unless the SSS members are betrayed again for a third time."

Cabaero's opinion about the betrayal of SSS members is pure speculation. The SSS is not in a position to make any formal statement on BDO's offer to merge with EPCIB at this time because of a pending case in the Supreme Court involving its EPCIB shares.

But the Social Security Commission is studying BDO's proposal to merge with EPCIB. It still has to go through several rigorous and intensive studies by our investment group before a decision can be made on the proposal. Rest assured, however, the SSS will decide with prudence and with utmost concern for its more than 25 million members.

—JOEL P. PALACIOS,
assistant vice president,
Media Affairs Department
Social Security System,
East Avenue, Diliman, QC

Pacquiao's win: Is it worth all the rejoicing?

"WHEREFORE REJOICE?" THUS asked a Roman senator of Julius Caesar's triumphant entry into Rome. At the risk of being called a spoiler or a *kontrabida*, I dare ask the same question of the hysteria over Manny Pacquiao's return to the Philippines. Mind you, I did not bet on Erik Morales, although I honestly thought he could win—as I did not see the hype in his training.

It was a non-title fight that Pacquiao won. Morales was on the downhill—*palaos na*! Boxing is a non-major Olympic event.

Most of us love winners and popular personalities but only when they are hot items. Then we forget them easily. Who still remembers Velasco, Espinosa or the Bad Boy from Dadiangas?

The Pacquiao brouhaha only seeks to entertain and make us forget the unsolvable problems that have confronted us for so long. It brings to mind the "Thrilla in Manila" and the Miss Universe pageant during the Marcos dictatorship.

Now comes the too familiar spectacle of poor boys donning gloves and sparring or fighting in dingy streets in the hope of becoming another Pacquiao and escaping poverty. They are cleverly diverted from the real cause of their poverty and the most effective means of resolving it—which is not by becoming a boxing world champion.

A few days ago, a number of overseas Filipino workers came back to the country with tales of horror from the countries where they had been forced to work by poverty at home. What has happened to their complaints? What will happen to them whom we have called heroes?

What comparable honors do we bestow upon the other OFWs whose dollar remittances have saved the Philippine economy, when they return to the country?

Many among us have not only overacted but also persisted in being hypocritical. Hello, anyone? "Wherefore rejoice? What conquests brings he home? What tributaries follow him to Rome, to grace in captive bonds his chariot wheels?"

—ARCHIMEDES S. MARQUEZ,
429 Gov. A. Pascual St.,
Navotas, Metro Manila

Send back tourism bill to committee

WE WOULD LIKE TO EXPRESS our grave concern over Senate Bill No. 2138 which seeks to reorganize the Department of Tourism. We are sad to note that it was crafted without adequate consultation from stakeholders in the travel and tourism industry. The bill is now undergoing floor deliberations in the Senate en route to second and final reading.

Although the measure has some merits, it contains a number of provisions that could harm, instead of promote, tourism.

The US$5 "tourism fee" to be charged to tourists for every night of stay in hotels as proposed in the bill will be a burden to both tourists and hotels. Tourists already pay their tour packages in their countries of origin. The fee will be a surprise additional surcharge at checkout time. On the other hand, the fee will force hotels to jack up their room rates and make them uncompetitive in the Asean region.

The bill also requires tourism enterprises to obtain not only several permits and licenses from local government units but also regular accreditation from the DOT. This will over-regulate the industry and put tourism enterprises at the mercy of these agencies. A sure prescription for corruption.

As far as standards are concerned, tourism-oriented organizations have set up their own standards to police their ranks and ensure their competitiveness. It would be foolish for them to set up criteria that would cause the self-destruction of tourism enterprises.

What is beyond comprehension in the bill is that the tourism secretary will be assuming functions and tasks that are beyond his capability and expertise. He or she will participate or get involved in policymaking matters pertaining to aviation, security, transportation, infrastructure development and licensing. The tourism secretary can even issue visa to tourists, assuming the function of the Department of Foreign Affairs, and would have a say in the granting of franchise to airport taxi operators. The tourism secretary will thus become very powerful, perhaps, even more powerful than the President of the Philippines.

Anybody who will assume the post of tourism secretary, should the bill be enacted into law, will have to be a "superman" to be able to perform the job effectively.

To put sense into the bill and make it reflective of industry concerns and needs, we ask that the measure be brought back to the concerned Senate committees for further discussions and fine-tuning.

—ROBERT LIM JOSEPH,
chair,
National Association of
Independent Travel Agencies,
2253 Aurora Blvd. (Tramo),
Pasay City

The tragedy was bound to happen

ON THE NIGHT OF FEB. 3, I drove by the PhilSports Arena (formerly Ultra) and saw the line of people stretching down toward Valle Verde Village. I also saw people sleeping on the road. I was surprised at what I saw. I asked a couple of people walking and that's when I found out it was because of the "Wowowee" show.

We were saddened to hear the following morning, Feb. 4, that more than 70 people, mostly elderly people, died in a stampede at the PhilSports Arena. I figured it was going to happen because it was really chaotic down there—lack of police, no Channel 2 vans or organizers from the network, no emergency stations, etc.

The media, government and police should have prepared for an emergency response to a possible emergency situation. They will pay for this.

—SHIRLEY GRANDE,
shirleygrande@yahoo.com

Leftists keep blaming gov't

I WAS IRKED BY THE LEFTIST PARty-list groups (Sanlakas, Akbayan, among others) which readily blamed the government for the recent stampede at the PhilSports Arena, saying that poverty force the poor to swarm into game shows.

We live in a democratic country, the networks and all have their freedom to do what they like, much as these so-called "congressmen" can do whatever they like to do. The poor people who went to Ultra have the right to join or not to join the game show. They went there on their own free will, notwithstanding the risks involved.

May I point out that these "legislative *desperados*" always blame the government for whatever tragedy, mistake and blunder there is in the country. Why can't they help the poor and act like a Filipino, for a change?

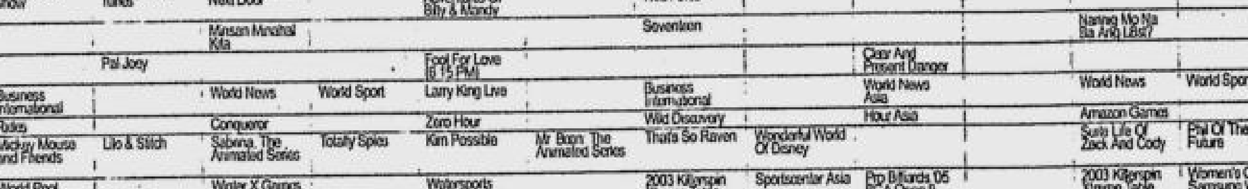
This country will never progress if the communists keep on barking up the wrong tree. We need unity, not division.

I appeal to them: For God's sake and for the Filipinos who died fighting for a better life, open your minds. Let us be realistic, nothing will prosper if we keep on fighting and engaging in too much politicking and killing on the altar of their unrealistic ideology.

—ROWELL DIAZ,
rowelldiaz@yahoo.com

INQUIRER TV GUIDE

Tuesday, February 7, 2006



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Channel	2:30PM	[illegible]	3:30PM	4:00PM	4:30PM	5:00PM	5:30PM	6:00PM	6:30PM	7:00PM	[illegible]	8:00PM	8:30PM	[illegible]	9:30PM	10:00PM	10:30PM	11:00PM	11:30PM
ABC 5			Winner TV Shopping		World Pool League				Sentro	Mumbai Thrillers	ABC Action Movies				Big News	The Apprentice		ALI	
ABS-CBN 2	Kapamilya Cinema				Little Amy	Mr. Bean	Naruto	Amazing Twins	Melzar Garden Season 2	TV Patrol World	Gulong Ng Palad	Mga Anghel Na Walang Langit	Only You	Vietnam Rose	Forbidden Love	Sora			Insider
AXN		CSI Crime Scene Investigation (Season 5)				Maximum Exposure (Season II)		Lost		24		When Animals Attack		Worlds Apart		David Blaine Street Magic		Las Vegas	
Cartoon Network	Johnny Bravo	Dexter's Laboratory	Powerpuff Girls	Tom & Jerry Show	Baby Looney Tunes	Codename Kids Next Door		The Grim Adventures Of Billy & Mandy		Power Rangers Wild Force	The Gransazers	Battle B-Daman	Energy Bomb	X-Men Evolution	Samurai Jack	Justice League	Static Shock	Power Rangers Wild Force	The Gransazers
Cinema One		Geron Olivar				Minsan Minahal Kita				Seventeen				Narinig Mo Na Ba Ang L8st?				Laro Sa Baga	
Cinemax					Pal Joey			Fool For Love (6:15 PM)				Clear And Present Danger				Secretary (10:15PM)			
CNN				Business International		World News	World Sport	Larry King Live		Business International		World News Asia		World News	World Sport	World News Asia		World News	World Sport
Discovery Channel		I Survived		Rides		Conqueror		Zero Hour		Wild Discovery		Hour Asia		Amazon Games		Zero Hour		Crime Stories	
Disney Channel	Mr Bean The Animated Series	Totally Spies	Art Attack/Untalkative Bunny	Mickey Mouse and Friends	Lilo & Stitch	Sabrina, The Animated Series	Totally Spies	Kim Possible	Mr Bean The Animated Series	That's So Raven	Wonderful World Of Disney			Suite Life Of Zack And Cody	Phil Of The Future	Mickey Mouse and Friends	Chip N Dale's Rescue Rangers	Wonderful World Of Disney	
ESPN		Pro Billiards '04 BCA Open 9-Ball C'ships Fin.		World Pool League '01		Winter X Games Classix		Watersports Programming Hot Water		2003 Killerspin Xtreme Table Tennis C'ships	Sportscenter Asia	Pro Billiards '05 BCA Open 9-Ball C'ships Semi-finals		2003 Killerspin Xtreme Table Tennis C'ships	Women's Golf Samsung World C'ships '05				Sportscenter Asia
ETC	The Insider Weekend	Outback Jack		Change of Heart	Elimidate	Blind Date	Fifth Wheel	Seinfeld	Ambush Makeover	The Tyra Banks Show		One Tree Hill 2		The O.C. 2		Entertainment Tonight	The Insider	The Tonight Show With Jay Leno	
EWTN	Catholic Social Teaching	Angelus (3:15 PM)	ABCatholic	Angel Force	Angels Of God	Rosary With Mother Angelica	The Gospel Of John	EWTN Gallery	Lord, Have Mercy	The Journey Home Encore		Council Of Faith	Good Or Evil- Who Decides?	Daily Mass (SAP) Live		Angelus (10:15PM)	Rome Reports	Web Of Faith	
Fox News		Hannity & Colmes		On The Record With Greta Van Susteren		The O'Reilly Factor		Your World With Neil Cavuto		Fox & Friends						Fox News Live			
GMA 7	Kung Mamahalin Mo Lang Ako	Now and Forever	Date With Tiffany		Dragonball Z	Slam Dunk	Frog Prince	24 Oras		Extra Challenge	Sugo	Etheria	Starstruck 3	Jewel In The Palace		Bahay Mo Ba 'To?			Saksi
Hallmark Channel	Bewitched	Mcleod's Daughters IV		H2O (3:50 PM)			Who's The Boss? II	Bewitched	The Nanny	Strong Medicine		Judging Amy		Follow The Stars Home			Family Law III (10:35PM)		Strong Medicine
HBO				Bullseye!			The Lord Of The Rings: Return Of The King							Before Sunset		Mona Lisa Smile (10:15PM)			
IBC 13		EZ Shop				Home Shopping Network	IBC Express Balita	Pangarap Kong Jackpot		TBA						Japan Video Topics	IBC News Tonite	Home Shopping Network	
JackTV	The Daily Show With Jon Stewart	The Late Show With David Letterman		Raw				The Batman	Just For Laughs (Gags)	Mad TV		That 70s Show	Arrested Development	The Late Show With David Letterman		The Daily Show With Jon Stewart	Comedy Central Presents	South Park	The Man Show
Lifestyle Network	Secret Gardens	The Fix	Mission Organization	Carol Duvall	Molto Mario	Hot Off The Grill	Good Eats	Extreme Cuisine	Unwrapped	Passion For Dessert	Second Look		Look For Less	Life & Style		Who's Wedding Is It Anyway?		Road & Track	Back To Basics
MTV Philippines	MTV Screen	Spring Break	Dyes		Punk'D	Pop Inc		MTV Hits			Aeon Flux	MTV Hits	Get Spotted	TRL		Advance Warning	Pimp My Ride	MTV Hits	VH1 Video Collections
MYX		Rock MYX	My MYX	Mellow MYX	Urban MYX	Take 5	MYX Versions	MYX Firsts	Star MYX	MYXILOG	Pop MYX	MYX Daily Top Ten		Top Of The Pops	Radio MYX	MYX News	My MYX	MYX Backtrax	OPM MYX
National Geographic	Wild Family Secrets	Seconds From Disaster		Is It Real?		Air Crash Investigation		Top 5 - Mysterious Universe		Wow!		About Asia		Nat'l Geographic Specials		Air Crash Investigation		Seconds From Disaster	
NBN		Value Vision		Value Vision		Teledyaryo	Dyos Ko, Mahal Mo Ba Sila?	Tinig ng Bayan (Live)				Teledyaryo				Pilipinas Ngayon Na!		Bantay OCW With Susan K	
Nickelodeon	Blues Clues	Rugrats	Hey Arnold!	My Life As A Teenage Robot	The Adventures Jimmy Neutron	SpongeBob SquarePants	The Fairly Odd Parents	All That	Naturally Sadie	Romeo	Drake & Josh	The Fairly Odd Parents	All Grown Up	As Told By Ginger	Rocket Power	ChalkZone	The Wild Thornberrys	The Angry Beavers	The Brothers Garcia
PBO			Juan N Tod - Wanted				Lovelife				Hustler				Tatlong Mukha ng Pag Ibig				Alamid Ang Alamat
Qtv	Ikaw Lang Ang Mamahalin		Sinner Hungry Heart	The Prince Of Tennis	MMS (My Music Station)		Moms		Love At Aegean Sea	Hotelier	All In	Laugh To Laugh Ang Kulit	My Guardian Baby		News On Q	Sana'y Muling Makapiling		MINT (Music Interactive)	
RPN 9	TV Shopping		Defenders Of The Earth	Hey Arnold!	Wild Thornberrys	Sponge Bob	As Told By Ginger	Entertainment Tonight	The Insider	The Real Gilligan's Island		The Cut		Paradise Hotel		Newswatch Now	Tuesday Night Thrill		
SBN 21				New Life TV Shopping				Winner TV Shopping				Oras Ng Himala		Oras ng Katotohanan		SBN Music Video			
Solar Sports		2006 Adelaide Open SF2 Malisse vs Berdych		Fight	GWS 04-2006	Swatch World Tour Wmn's Finals Salvador '06			Swatch World Tour Men's Finals Salvador '06			NBA Game Timberwolves @ Suns					Sportsdesk	Denmark Open Men's Singles SF	
Sports Plus				Ray Ban Celebrity Poker Challenge				Inside the PGA	SMB Poker Bar Tour 3	World Game		Ultimate Fighting Championship				Party Poker.com World Open 2005			
Star Movies			Class Action (3:25 PM)			Runaway Man (5:15 PM)					The Dead Will Tell (7:25 PM)			Held Up			Die Hard 2: Die Harder		
Star World		The Bold & The Beautiful		General Hospital		Angel		The Simpsons	Malcolm In The Middle	Star News Asia	Friends (Series 10)	Charmed		The O.C		North Shore		Friends (Series 10)	Charmed
Studio 23		Astroboy						Get Backers	Spirits	Wazzup Wazzup	Andromeda		Smallville (8:20 PM)	Point Pleasant (9:10 PM)		News Central	Oprah		Just Shoot Me

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Research volunteers await arrival of humpback whales

From page A1

emerged from the water beside the research boat.

"The first time I saw a whale I was expecting to be scared," he says. "I was not. I was excited."

Alaskan feeding grounds

Each year, the warming of the waters surrounding the Philippine archipelago signals the arrival of humpback whales at the Babuyan Islands from their Alaskan and Russian feeding grounds.

About 50 km north of Luzon, the Babuyan Islands is recognized as a region of high marine biodiversity.

Of the 25 species of cetaceans or marine mammals found in the Philippines, 14 can be found at Babuyan, including the humpback whale, sperm whale and bottlenosed dolphin.

External pressures, such as illegal hunting and overfishing, have threatened the global population of cetaceans. Humpbacks are listed as endangered under the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and the US Endangered Species Act.

Poorly documented

Until the late 1990s, the presence of humpback whales in the Philippines had been poorly documented. Although local communities at Babuyan were aware of the presence of the humpbacks, the Philippines lacked a formal research program to record the size and health of the population.

In 2000, WWF-Philippines began an annual program to collect data on the whales each summer. With the lack of government and private funding, the Humpback Whale Research and Conservation Project (HWRCP) has largely been powered by volunteer labor since it began.

While the technical nature of the work requires individuals to possess some skills relevant to the research, previous volunteers included visual artists, biologists, freelance photographers, fisheries graduates and mathematicians.

Elson Aca, WWF project officer for the HWRCP, first became involved as a humpback volunteer after finding himself frustrated working as a computer scientist.

"There's no interaction. The computer does not talk back to you," he says.

Off to sea at 6 a.m.

Although his employment did involve some environmental applications, such as computer-based mapping for urban planning, he says the humpback research project has offered him the opportunity to apply his skills at the grass-roots level.

Off to sea at 6 a.m., the research volunteers spend their days on a small chartered outrigger boat. When a whale is sighted, the time and location are recorded by a volunteer data recorder using the Global Positioning System (GPS).

A photographer also captures images of the whale's tail so that each animal could be identified. Each whale has a unique tail pattern allowing researchers to track the movements of individual whales globally.

In seeking adventure, volunteers for the project must make sacrifices such as ditching the modern conveniences of city living.

Signs of success

"We rent a house, or a hut," says Aca. "Water comes from a manual pump and the toilet is just a bowl which we tip out."

Food supplies for the project's two-month duration must also be brought in by boat at the start of summer.

Infrequent access to electricity makes computer data entry and contact with the outside world difficult. The recent construction of a cell site in the region, however, has improved communications somewhat.

The hard work in data collection is finally beginning to show signs of success. Last summer, 58 individual whales were sighted compared to seven in 2001.

Although sightings have increased, Aca believes that it is too early to analyze the results for any signs of population change due to the relatively short time span of the research.

Having focused on recording data about the whales in previous seasons, the WWF project this year seeks to strengthen relationships with the local community through education programs.

Fulfillment

"When the weather is poor ... we go into the schools and teach [the schoolchildren] about the importance of whales and other cetaceans," Aca says.

It is the kind of work that leaves no room to worry about the pay. Aca, who used to do consultancy work with various international organizations, like the Asian Development Bank and UN Development Program, has no regrets about exchanging his dollar-paying jobs.

"Monetary reward is not an issue anymore. There is a certain fulfillment to this," says Aca, who is proposing to stay in Babuyan for a year to focus on the work, depending on the availability of funds.

Volunteers will also gather sociodemographic data through surveys. Aca hopes to build a better understanding of the livelihoods of the Babuyan people and their perceptions of the environment.

Environmental education

"What the community needs up there is education," says Timoteo. "Environmental education is probably the most valuable contribution I can make to the project."

On Feb. 14, the volunteer team of seven will leave Manila for the islands. Traveling north by bus to Aparri in Cagayan, then taking a four- to five-hour boat trip to the Camiguin or Calayan Islands, the volunteers will be based there until late April, breaking only for Holy Week.

Timoteo, who will be returning to Babuyan this summer, is excited about enjoying a more simple existence.

"I like the serenity," he enthuses. "No noise, no traffic, no pollution."

David A. Hayes

IN THE KNOW

The 'singing' humpback whales

THE ACTIVE AND ACROBATIC HUMPBACK WHALE belongs to the family of rorquals, which is characterized by pleats running from the lower jaw to the belly and a fin on the back. The shape and color pattern of the humpback's fin and tail are distinctive, just like human fingerprints.

A humpback whale feeds on small fish and crustaceans, eating up to 1.5 tons a day. Adult humpbacks weigh 25-40 tons. Females are mostly longer than the males, measuring 13.7-15.2 meters, as opposed to the male's 12.2-14.6m. They reach sexual maturity in six to 10 years. A female humpback usually gives birth every two to three years, after a one-year gestation period.

Interestingly, male humpbacks sing complex "songs" that last 10-20 minutes. Scientists found that whales in the North American Atlantic population sang the same song as those in the North American Pacific population. The song changes gradually every year.

Most humpbacks also follow a regular migration route, going to temperate and polar waters during summer for feeding, and to tropical waters during winter for mating and giving birth. They do all this at the edges of the world's oceans, making them vulnerable to whalers. Humpbacks, which are also slow swimmers, number only 30,000 to 40,000 despite being given worldwide protection status by the International Whaling Commission in 1966.

Cyril L. Bonabente, PDI Research

Exec tells CBCP: Don't demonize mine industry

From page A1

Patrick Caoile, treasurer of the association, said the mining industry had taken exception to the pastoral letter of the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) which denounced the industry, because it virtually included miners among the rogues' gallery of pimps and "jueteng" lords.

"Mining people, who are mainly engineers and geologists looking for a scientific basis, are angry that bishops are meddling in economic affairs similar to events that our national hero, Jose Rizal, described almost 150 years ago," Caoile said.

"(I)t's time the bishops realized that the time of Spanish colonial rule is long gone. Or are they just afraid of losing control of their flock?"

The bishops called for the repeal of the Mining Act of 1995 and urged President Macapagal-Arroyo "to recall all approved mining concessions and to disapprove pending applications."

The Mining Act opened up the mining industry to foreign firms.

"The promised economic benefits of mining by these transnational corporations are outweighed by the dislocation of communities, especially among our indigenous brothers and sisters, the risks to health and livelihood, and massive environmental damage," the CBCP said.

Only 29 bishops against

Caoile noted that only 29 out of the roughly 112 bishops present at the CBCP annual meeting were against mining, with 12 of them coming from Bicol where the latest mining disaster, Lafayette's mine spill, occurred. The mine is on Rapu-Rapu Island in Albay.

Caoile said almost all of the 29 bishops opposed to mining were at least 70 years old.

"Bicol is by far one of the poorest regions in the country. Are the bishops afraid of progress as this may veer the attention of the people to other mundane concerns and the bishops will lose their power base among the impoverished?" he said.

"Karl Marx once said that religion is the opium of the people. The poorer they are, the more they need their religion," Caoile said. "But why limit antimining to Bicol? Why not impoverish the whole country?"

Deuteronomy

Caoile said that even the Bible urges the people to partake of nature's wealth.

"In Deuteronomy chapter 8, verses 8 to 10, the Lord describes the Promised Land as 'a land that produces wheat and barley, grapes, figs, pomegranates, olives and honey. There you will never go hungry or ever be in need. Its rocks have iron in them, and from its hills you can mine copper. You will have all you want to eat and you will give thanks to the Lord your God for the fertile land he has given you,'" he said.

Caoile wondered why the bishops' antimining views were not shared by their counterparts in Catholic countries in Latin America, like Chile and Peru, that derive a big chunk of their income from mining.

He said that if the Church wanted the mining industry to be accountable for the sins of one or two of its players, it (Church) should likewise be held accountable for the poverty in the country.

"The mining industry is a highly regulated industry and the mining concessionaires are made accountable even for disasters as what happened to Marcopper. Can the bishops also be held accountable if their antimining stance drives away foreign investments?" he said.

Caoile quoted Bishop Julio Labayen as saying that the Church's opposition to mining was not based on scientific grounds but "on moral considerations due to human rights violations."

"I had never associated mining activities in light of human rights violations. Of course, there are accidents like that of Marcopper in March 199[6]. But this was not caused by a deliberate and willful act of a human person against his fellowmen," Caoile said.

The Chamber of Mines of the Philippines announced last week that it was willing to hold a dialogue with the CBCP over the pastoral letter.

DENR to junk 7 applications for mining concessions

By Blanche S. Rivera

THE DEPARTMENT OF ENVIronment and Natural Resources announced yesterday that it would junk the applications for mining concessions filed by seven mining companies.

Environment Undersecretary for Mining Deinrado Dimalibot said the government was preparing to send out orders for cancellation to Cordillera Exploration Co., Pico Minerals Corp., Pinatubo Cement and Mining Corp., International Pursuit Inc., Asturias Chemical Industries Inc., Ignatius Mining Corp. and Golden Falcon Mineral Corp.

The seven companies had applied for Financial or Technical Assistance Agreements (FTAA), a contract between the Philippine government and mining companies for the large-scale exploration and development of minerals.

The cancelled FTAA applications covered a total area of 348,345 hectares. Luzon accounted for 47.2 percent of the cancelled submissions by area.

Pico's FTAA application for a 79,056-ha mine area in Cagayan Valley was the largest of the cancelled submissions.

"We have sent out intents to cancel to all 40 mining firms, but the seven will surely be cancelled. We are already preparing the cancellation orders for them," Dimalibot said in an interview.

The seven FTAAs were among 40 FTAA applications being reviewed by the DENR to check the applicants' compliance with documentary requirements and reassess the viability of the proposed concession areas.

The DENR sent a letter to all applicants on April 28 last year to see if the mining firms were still interested in pursuing their FTAA applications. No responses were received from the seven firms.

The DENR is reviewing the other 33 FTAA applications, assessing the viability of the proposed mining sites and ability of the mining companies to meet government requirements. *With a report from David Hayes*

Cabinet appointees face rough sailing at CA

From page A1

of the LDP (Laban ng Demokratikong Pilipino) leaders, to be a member of the board of directors of the Development Bank of the Philippines," Ermita said.

Nachura, the eighth to be named to a Cabinet post in three days, replaced Merceditas Gutierez, who was appointed Ombudsman late last year.

A lawyer, Nachura had returned to private practice after he failed to win a third term in Congress in the 2004 election. He has also been teaching law at San Beda College and Arellano University and conducting pre-bar reviews in various universities.

Nachura said the recent Cabinet appointments were preparations for a planned shift to the parliamentary system.

In for rough sailing

But Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago said Puno and Reyes were in for rough sailing at the Commission on Appointments.

Santiago, an administration member of the CA and a known critic of Puno, said that a single no vote in the commission would doom Puno and Reyes' appointments.

"For Puno and Reyes, the chickens have come home to roost. In other words, just a single enemy that they made in their long and checkered careers, as long as that enemy is a member of the CA, has the power to put an end to all their political ambitions," she said.

Santiago said Puno would have to explain his alleged "key role" in the so-called Sulo Hotel Operations Group, widely suspected of being at the center of "Operation Dagdag-Bawas" (vote padding and shaving) during the 1992 presidential election, which Santiago lost to Fidel Ramos.

In 1999, Santiago exposed alleged irregularities in the P200-million Motorola radio deal, the P3.6-billion Mahogany drug test deal and the P16-million handcuffs purchases by the DILG, which Puno had headed at the time.

Santiago said Reyes "is taking a rough road" to confirmation because "until now," the faction of former President Joseph Estrada "harbors a homicidal grudge against the (former Armed Forces) chief of staff who turned over the Armed Forces to so-called civil society" during the Edsa II revolt that ousted Estrada in January 2001.

Estrada's son, Sen. Jinggoy Estrada, is a member of the CA.

Wrong man at DENR

Senate Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel Jr. said Reyes "may be the wrong man" at the DENR since he had no "background and much less interest" in the environment and natural resources.

"President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo owes the public an explanation why she placed Reyes, a military man, as DENR secretary when ideally and by tradition, this position should be held by a person who is an environmentalist by training and inclination," Pimentel said.

He said Malacañang wanted Puno at the DILG so the administration could "make use of his expertise as a 'political operator' par excellence" in mobilizing local government executives to support Charter change, "the main aim of which is to perpetuate President Arroyo in power despite doubts over her legitimacy."

He added that Reyes' DENR post was a "fallback position" after Reyes rejected Malacañang's offer to appoint him ambassador to Washington.

Puno yesterday declared that he won't be giving up his Congress seat just yet.

"I will ask the President to allow me to take my oath of office as DILG secretary after I have been confirmed by the Commission on Appointments," he said.

Cavite Rep. Gilbert Remulla said "Puno's appointment could be read as a sign that Malacañang did not want Charter change."

The lawmaker believed that despite Ms Arroyo's wish to speed up the shift to a parliamentary system of government by June this year, Malacañang "is ensuring that it will not push through."

Kampi, which Puno heads as president, has not been supporting Cha-cha, according to Remulla.

People's initiative

Puno said Kampi, Ms Arroyo's political party, favored the constituent assembly espoused by Speaker Jose de Venecia over the constitutional convention preferred by the Senate as the mode of changing the Charter.

"It's still the best option for everyone," he said, but stressed that he was still open to a people's initiative to introduce specific amendments to the 1987 Constitution.

"It's one option," said the lawmaker, who is expected to spearhead the move by virtue of his position as local government secretary.

"I have been out of the DILG for almost five years now," said Puno.

"So my first task would be to hold a series of consultations with key officials of the DILG to update me about the department's thrust in line with the President's agenda."

Not a payback

Puno took time to belie allegations that he was the political operator behind Ms Arroyo's campaign in the 2004 presidential election, and that his appointment was a political payback.

"I don't think anybody owes me anything. The President does not owe me anything, except the votes she got from Antipolo," he said, adding:

"I have nothing to hide. I have no agenda."

Puno said his being linked to three anomalous deals during his two-year stint at the DILG was "to be expected."

GMA allies twit 'meeting of strange bedfellows'

From page A1

"The thing speaks for itself," said Binay, grinning from ear to ear.

"After the Mass, Mrs. Aquino and Mr. Estrada shook hands. Then they all went to another small room for snacks," said Aquino's spokesperson Rafael Lopa.

Aquino, 73, was at the forefront of the campaign to oust Estrada, 68, in 2001. The Sunday meeting was the first time the two leaders came face to face.

Estrada, wearing a beige jacket and black sunglasses, said what happened before "was over," that the "hatchet ... was already buried."

Bound by common desire

Estrada, who is facing plunder and perjury charges, returned to his detention center in Tanay, Rizal, yesterday after a five-day confinement at the SJMC.

"They are strange bedfellows bound by a common desire to oust the President at all cost. None of them, however, are considered as viable options to replace the President," House Majority Leader Prospero Nograles said in a statement.

"Until now, we are only treated to photo opportunities by opposition leaders and members because their declaration to unify has not materialized," Nograles said.

Deputy Speaker Gerry Salapuddin said the four opposition leaders must have been hoping that they still had political clout.

"They are hoping against hope that they can still influence the public, but they are only entertaining an illusion," he said.

Salapuddin said the meeting showed that Drilon was part of the problem and was really aiming for the presidency through an opposition attempt at a power grab.

'Drilon dreaming'

"Senator Drilon is dreaming. It's wishful thinking for him and the opposition to see the President give up the presidency because the people remain strongly behind her," Salapuddin said.

Malacañang also dismissed Sunday's gathering.

"Is this the first time this is happening? They have had a lot of shows of unity. They had been marching and holding arms with each other, mounting a people's court and all sorts of moves to show unity. But up to now, we do not know how united they really are," said Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita.

"The fact remains that President Arroyo has the mandate of the people," Ermita said. *With reports from Nelson Flores, TJ Burgonio and Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.*

NORTHERN LUZON BUREAU
Room 201, Bonuan Apartelle
10 Happy Glen Loop, Baguio City
Tel. No. (074)443-9255
Fax No. (074)443-8971
E-mail: inq_baguio@inquirer.com.ph

SOUTHERN LUZON BUREAU
2nd Floor, Los Baños Bldg.
Cor. Peñaranda and Aguinaldo Sts.
Legazpi City
Telefax No. (052) 480-4182
E-mail: inq_bicol@inquirer.com.ph

Across the NATION

E-mail: pr_provincial_news@inquirer.com.ph

Text us your feedback: inquirer atn name/age/city/message to 2207 (Globe) or 283 (Smart) *Assistant Editor* **Tony Bergonia**

VISAYAS BUREAU
c/o Cebu Daily News
18-15 Escario St., Cebu City
Tel. Nos. (032) 233-0346/233-0349
Fax No. (032) 232-9938
E-mail: inq_cebu@inquirer.com.ph

MINDANAO BUREAU
FEP Printing Corp. Bldg.
Ma-a Road, Davao City
Tel. No. (082)244-1770 to 71
Fax No. (082)244-1771
E-mail: inq_davao@inquirer.com.ph

Semirara spill: 364,000 liters of oil

By Nestor P. Burgos Jr.
PDI Visayas Bureau

ILOILO CITY—THE VOLUME OF THE OIL SPILL OFF the coast of Semirara Island in Antique has reached 364,120 liters, according to the Coast Guard.

Capt. Arturo Olavario, Coast Guard commander for Western Visayas, said the figure was the result of a technique called "sounding," which measured the remaining volume of fuel left in the four tanks of the power barge.

He said the volume of oil spill was around a third of the total 874,570 liters carried by the power barge of the National Power Corp.

The Coast Guard estimates were higher than the 195,000 liters reported by the power firm because it was based on the report of field personnel, said Napocor spokesperson Dennis Gana.

He, however, maintained that the estimated volume of oil spill was less than 200,000 liters.

The Napocor power barge ran aground on Dec. 18 200 meters off Sitio Bobog in Barangay Semirara, one of three villages of the island, after encountering huge waves and strong winds.

The spilled bunker fuel has contaminated 236 hectares of mangroves (about four-and-a-half times the size of Luneta Park) and 40 sq km of marine life near Semirara Island, part of a group of nine islands of Caluya, Antique.

The oil spill has also contaminated fish sanctuaries and damaged sea grasses and coral reefs. At least 10,000 residents have been affected.

The incident was considered the country's biggest oil spill ever.

The Special Board of Marine Inquiry (SBMI) will today begin marathon hearings at the Coast Guard headquarters in Iloilo City to look into the cause of the grounding. The hearings are expected to last until Friday.

The four-member board has summoned the captain of the tugboat that towed the barge, Napocor representatives and Coast Guard personnel.

The cleanup crew in Semirara has collected 25,085 sacks of contaminated material, according to a Coast Guard report.

A team of researchers and scientists from the University of the Philippines in the Visayas (UPV) will conduct studies on the impact of the oil spill on the mangroves this week.

PREPAREDNESS LYN RILLON/PDI PHOTO
Members of the Light Reaction Battalion demonstrate their capabilities during counter terrorist exercises in Fort Magsaysay during the visit of President Macapagal-Arroyo.

ROUNDUP

Suspected hijacker killed

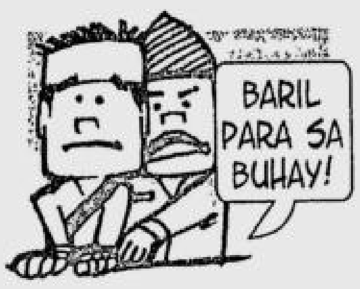
CAMP VICENTE LIM, Laguna—Two men wearing ski masks shot dead the alleged leader of a group of hijackers in Bacoor, Cavite on Wednesday. Police said Joel Bawag, 31, a resident of Barangay Javalera, General Trias, Cavite was about to board his Mazda car after visiting his common-law wife at about 8 a.m. when the two unidentified suspects shot him at close range. He said the victim died on the spot from at least five bullet wounds while the suspects fled the area in a gray sedan. The victim's live-in partner told investigators that her partner had been receiving threats after supposedly spilling the beans on some local and police officials involved in hijacking. Police said Bawag was suspected to be the head of a hijacking syndicate preying on semiconductor firms in Cavite and Laguna.

Marlon Ramos, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

DA-FAO grant for Quezon rehab

AGRICULTURE Secretary Domingo Panganiban turned over some P12 million worth of farm inputs to the towns of Real, Infanta and General Nakar in Quezon as part of government support for the rehabilitation of areas devastated by flash floods and landslides in 2004. In a ceremony held Jan. 19 in Infanta, Panganiban expressed hope that the grant package, consisting of three tractors, 30 carabaos, 30 pigs and assorted planting materials, would be of help to the farmers, a statement released by the department yesterday said. The grant is a component of a DA-Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) project. Among those who witnessed the turnover were FAO representative Ramesh Jain, Director Armando Duque of the National Disaster Coordinating Council and DA regional director Dennis Araullo.

Guns for captives


BARIL PARA SA BUHAY!

DAVAO CITY—Communist rebels holding three lumad in captivity here have demanded firearms in exchange for the victims' release, the military said on Friday. Col. Eduardo del Rosario, commander of Task Force Davao, said Leonardo Pitao's group demanded at least five M-14 rifles before freeing their captives, including a village councilor that they snatched on Jan. 25. Del Rosario said they would not negotiate with the rebels and soldiers have been sent to rescue the hostages.

Dennis Jay Santos, PDI Mindanao Bureau

Co-op exec hurt in attack

CAMP VICENTE LIM, Laguna—Unidentified men shot and wounded an official of an electric cooperative in Batangas while he was sleeping in his house in Laurel town before Thursday midnight. Senior Supt. Francisco Don Montenegro, Batangas police director, identified the victim as Ruben Calinisan, 64, director of the Batangas Electric Cooperative and principal of Wenceslao National High School in Laurel town.

Marlon Ramos, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Vizcaya gov defies Comelec ruling unseating her

BAYOMBONG, NUEVA VIZCAYA—Gov. Luisa Cuaresma reported for work on Friday despite an order by the Commission on Elections that nullified her proclamation and directed her to vacate her post.

Cuaresma said her lawyers have asked the Comelec en banc to reconsider the Jan. 31 decision of the poll body's first division and prevent its implementation.

"As you can see, I'm still the governor. It's a long way to go," she said.

In a resolution promulgated Tuesday, the Comelec declared lawyer Leonardo Byron Perez as the winner in the 2004 gubernatorial elections, after it invalidated 3,509 votes earlier counted in Cuaresma's favor.

Perez, who filed a motion for execution on Wednesday, welcomed Cuaresma's appeal.

"That is among the legal remedies that they can resort to, but I am still confident that it will not prosper," he said.

The Comelec resolution said Perez, a former provincial board member, edged out Cuaresma in the final tally—53,715 votes to 53,037 votes.

The poll body said the resolution was "immediately executory" due to the "proximity of the end of the term of the contested office."

The commission held a recount of ballots from the 308 precincts in Bambang, Dupax del Norte, Dupax del Sur and Kasibu towns, which Perez questioned in his protest.

He said votes cast in his favor in these precincts were either "misread or misappreciated" by the chairpersons of the boards of election inspectors.

Cuaresma answered Perez's protest with a counter-protest of results from Bayombong, Solano and Bagabag towns.

The resolution has created confusion among residents here, fueled by text messages which claimed that Cuaresma left her office on Tuesday night and that Perez took over the post the next day.

Policemen have been sent to the provincial capitol grounds amid reports that supporters from both camps would hold vigils there.

Melvin Gascon, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

Probe of NBI agents' beating in Bacolod sought

By Carla. P. Gomez
PDI Visayas Bureau

BACOLOD CITY—JUSTICE Secretary Raul Gonzalez and Philippine National Police chief Arturo Lomibao have ordered an investigation of the beating of five National Bureau of Investigation and two Bureau of Immigration and Deportation agents allegedly by about 15 members of the Negros Oriental Police Office (NOPO) on Saturday.

"I will not allow this to pass unchallenged. This is a disgrace to the law enforcement profession," Gonzalez said yesterday.

He said charges would be filed against those responsible.

Lomibao had also ordered the Police Regional Office in Central Visayas (PRO-7), headed by Chief Supt. Edgar Gador, to investigate the incident, said PNP spokesperson, Chief Supt. Leopoldo Bataoil.

Gador has been directed to coordinate closely with the NBI in the investigation to determine the administrative and criminal liability of those involved, Bataoil said.

Investigation

Senior Supt. Melvin Ramon Buenafe, NOPO director, said he also ordered an investigation to determine if the allegations of the NBI in Bacolod were true.

But he added that reports reaching his office indicated that civilians were the ones who beat up the NBI agents and not the police.

A source from the NBI told the INQUIRER that two BI agents from Manila, who went with the NBI team, suffered injuries in their faces.

An NBI agent was also in serious condition in a hospital in Bacolod due to a dislocated spinal column as a result of the beatings.

A team of NBI and BI agents, led by Special Investigator Menci Mamaspas, went to a golf and country club in Pamplona town, Negros Oriental to serve a search warrant on Ha Hae Bong, a Korean, for illegal possession of firearms. *With a report from Alex Pal, PDI Visayas Bureau*

Ex-senator says he's victim in Cavite land dispute

CALAMBA CITY—MOVIE ACtor and former Sen. Ramon Revilla Sr. yesterday dismissed the claims of tenant-farmers who accused him of illegally evicting them from a 25-hectare agricultural estate in Silang, Cavite.

Revilla, who became famous for his "Robinhood" portrayals in the movies, likewise threatened to file libel charges against "those who continue to distort the facts and feed lies to the media."

He said the demolition of the houses in Barangay Cabangaan last Friday was legal.

He said it was he, not the 42 families of farmers, who was stripped of the right to utilize the land which he legally owned.

"It is grossly unfair that (by) succumbing to their pleas, they would distort the facts to the media and portray me as the villain (w)hen I and my family are the ones being deprived of lawful use of the property we purchased legally," Revilla said in a statement sent to the INQUIRER.

Revilla, now the chair of the Philippine Reclamation Authority, said the Department of Agrarian Reform Adjudication Board (DARAB) ordered the farmers to vacate the property in April 2004, but the farmers won't respect the order. *Marlon Ramos, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

16 soldiers get medals for Tarlac clashes

STA. IGNACIA, TARLAC—President Macapagal-Arroyo awarded on Monday the gold cross and wounded personnel medals to 16 government soldiers who took part in the Jan. 31 clashes with New People's Army rebels.

"Congratulations, great job," the President told Lt. Col. Gregory Cayetano, commanding officer of the 71st Infantry Battalion during ceremonies held atop a hill in Barangay Sta. Inez West here.

She reiterated her administration's commitment to allocate P5 billion for the Armed Forces' reform program and P1 billion for the soldiers' housing projects.

Leading the awardees was 2nd Lt. Ali Sumangil who received both the gold cross and wounded personnel medals.

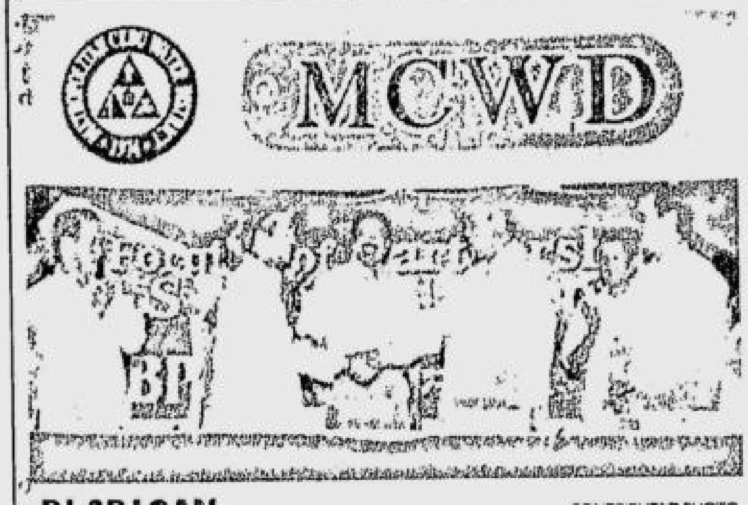
Sumangil, commander of the 7th Infantry Battalion's Bravo Company who was wounded during the clashes, was cited for "refusing to be evacuated and for leading his men amid intense enemy fire."

1st Lt. Dindo Perez, 2nd Lt. Nhoky Siao, 2nd Lt. Ildefonso Alanano, 2nd Lt. Carmelo Jaluague, Sgt. Rodrigo Andres, Cpl. Antonio Ballocanag, Cpl. Elizalde Mañebo, Pfc. Jupiter Ragel, Pfc. Rodney Alegre, Pfc. Harold Fabros and Pfc. Jesus Ocsona received the gold cross medal for gallantry. Ocsona also received the wounded personnel medal.

Cpl. Jerry Galas, who died in the encounter, was given the gold cross medal posthumously. His wife, Imelda, received the award.

Pfc. Aristotle Lomibao, Pfc. Romy Mendez and Private Armand Cuacito received the wounded personnel medal.

The Northern Luzon Command reported that 18 NPA rebels died in the encounter but Jose Aglion, spokesperson of the NPA Central Luzon command, claimed only eight fatalities from their ranks. *Jo Martinez-Clemente and Russell Arador, PDI Central Luzon Desk*



P1.2B LOAN CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Officials of the Development Bank of the Phils. recently signed a P1.2 billion loan to cover the unpaid accounts of the Metro Cebu Water District (MCWD) with the Local Water Utilities Administration. Shaking hands are the principal signatories in the loan deal–DBP head Reynaldo David (left) and MCWD board chair Juan Saul Montecillo (right).

Stampede victim's kin recovers cash

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

THANKS TO AN HONEST WOMAN, a family has found a reason to be thankful despite their pain and loss.

Yesterday, Candy Lacno, a volunteer of the Pasig City Rescue Team, returned to the daughters of vegetable vendor Aurora Soriano P49,000 in cash.

Soriano, 56, was among those killed during Saturday's stampede at the PhilSports Arena (formerly Ultra) in Pasig.

Lacno said she was frisking the victims' bodies for identification cards. When she got to Soriano, she found the bundle of money in the woman's pocket.

"I was surprised. I had to look at the bundle closely to confirm if it was really money," Lacno told reporters in Filipino.

Lacno and other team officials turned over the money to Soriano's daughters, Lovinsky and Shirley, inside the office of Pasig City Mayor Vicente Eusebio.

Eusebio said the City Council will pass a resolution to commend Lacno and the rescue team.

Meanwhile, the mayor blamed the organizers of the ABS-CBN noontime show Wowowee, saying the security they provided was not enough to prevent the stampede.

"They should have anticipated that the crowd would swell. They should have changed their plans when they saw that the crowd exceeded the capacity of the arena," Eusebio told the INQUIRER yesterday.

Seventy-four persons, mostly elderly women, were killed in the stampede during what should have been a grand celebration of the first anniversary of Wowowee. More than 300 others were injured.

"The security groups of both the organizers and Ultra should be held responsible," Eusebio, a member of the fact-finding committee formed to investigate the tragedy, said.

On the other hand, two other mayors, Valenzuela City Mayor Sherwin Gatchalian and Caloocan Mayor Enrico Echiverri, have promised to give financial assistance to the kin of their constituents who were killed in the stampede.

Five of the 74 killed came from Valenzuela while another five were from Caloocan City. *With Nancy C. Carvajal*

DREAMSCAPE
An old woman finds a perfect spot to take an afternoon nap on a sidewalk in Malate, Manila.
JESS YUSON

Total ban sought for QC flyover

By Tarra V. Quismundo

THE METROPOLITAN MANILA DEVELOPMENT Authority (MMDA) may ban trucks totally from the C-5 Katipunan flyover which had been weakened by a fire in December.

Should the ban be implemented, however, it would not be for safety reasons but because of traffic concerns.

"There are recommendations from different sectors in the Tandang Sora and Katipunan area for the total ban of trucks possibly because traffic became lighter (on the flyover)," MMDA Traffic Operations Center (TOC) Executive Director Angelito Vergel de Dios told the INQUIRER.

Trucks, or vehicles weighing over five tons, were temporarily banned from using the flyover in December after a four-hour fire razed some 300 shanties built underneath the structure, making it brittle.

On Jan. 10, the MMDA and the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) closed down the flyover to all types of vehicles from 10 p.m. to 5 a.m.

The closure, which lasted for a week, was to allow DPWH engineers to determine how best to repair the infrastructure.

Vergel de Dios said businessmen, residents and school owners in Katipunan have asked the agency to implement a total ban on trucks using the flyover once the repairs have been completed. They told the MMDA that traffic has become lighter in the area due to the truck ban.

"We are not considering it yet, but there are recommendations. As of now, [the traffic situation] has improved in Katipunan because the trucks were diverted to other roads... Naturally, traffic would ease up," said the traffic chief, affirming the observation.

Vergel de Dios said they would hold consultations with truckers' groups and the Quezon City government before deciding whether or not to enforce the ban.

"As [MMDA Chair Bayani Fernando] said, we should not restrict the movement of trucks because they are the backbone of trade, carrying important goods. We could implement truck bans, but we should provide alternate roads that are, as much as possible, parallel to where they are banned," he added.

The DPWH has started repairing the flyover, installing steel bolts that would bolster its damaged underbelly. Vergel de Dios could not say when repair work would be completed although he added that the department had initially said it would take about a month. Trucks, most of which come from Commonwealth Avenue en route to factories in Pasig and other destinations south of Manila, have been using alternate routes since they were banned from the flyover.

ABS-CBN to blame for the tragedy

ON TARGET

Ramon Tulfo

NOBODY WANTED SATURDAY'S TRAGEDY to happen. Neither ABS-CBN, nor the huge crowd outside the Ultra in Pasig, wanted it.

But the tragedy could have been prevented had the country's biggest radio-TV network taken steps to manage the crowd.

In its eagerness to overtake rival network GMA 7 in the ratings game, ABS-CBN tried to bite more than it could chew. It got gagged as a consequence.

For example, the Wowowee organizers knew that only a certain number of people could be accommodated at the Ultra. But why didn't they turn away the excess crowd after the full-capacity number was reached?

Why didn't they tell the people who could no longer be taken in, "Sorry, but the place can take in only such-and-such a number of people. Better luck next time."

The show's organizers should be held accountable for negligence.

* * *

Some people blame show host Willie Revillame for the tragedy

Hello! Revillame is only a talent. He runs the show before the camera. Off camera, he doesn't have any say on how the show should be managed.

I sympathize with Willie. He had given everything to make the show a success—and it is—but the tragedy happened.

In fact, he loves his job so much he was willing to go on with the show even after the tragedy just so he would not disappoint the crowd already inside the Ultra.

Not that Willie should be blamed for being callous. He typifies the attitude of show biz people whose slogan is that no matter what happens, the show must go on.

* * *

When I switched on the TV set to watch the aftermath of the tragedy at the Ultra, I was not surprised to see Sen. Dick Gordon at the scene helping out.

It was typical of Dick, who is chair of the Philippine National Red Cross, to be at the scene of a calamity.

In 1990, Dick was in Cabanatuan City when a school building collapsed, trapping many students and killing scores of them. Dick was not supposed to be there since he was then mayor of Olongapo City, but he went there just the same to help in the rescue operations.

During the fluvial parade tragedy in Bocaue, Bulacan, on July 2, 1993, Dick sent divers to retrieve bodies in the murky river. At that time he was chair of the Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority.

While he was campaigning in a Nueva Ecija town, the market burned. Senatorial candidate Dick Gordon got down from his vehicle and managed the firefighting operations.

Giving a helping hand to victims of tragedy is second nature to Dick.

I remember an anecdote about Dick in the aftermath of the Mt. Pinatubo eruption. A civic group from Manila went to Olongapo to hand over to food and used clothing to Dick for victims of the disaster.

The group brought along a TV crew and news photographers for the occasion. The group wanted their generosity published in the national papers and seen on TV.

Dick Gordon didn't attend the ceremony highlighting the donations received from the civic group. He said later he believed generosity should never be made public.

"If you give financial help to the least of your brethren, why make a public show of it?" he said.

* * *

The government-run Rizal Medical Center brought out the best it could offer in treating the Ultra tragedy survivors, and handling relatives of those who died.

The RMC acted with uncharacteristic efficiency even with its unlimited resources.

I say "uncharacteristic" because several doctors and nurses in that Pasig hospital didn't give comfort and proper care to poor patients who sought treatment there.

Perhaps the RMC staff has changed. And that's welcome news.

Down with elevated complaints desks

By Nancy C Carvajal

COMPLAINANTS TROOPING TO POLICE stations in the Camanava (Caloocan-Malabon-Navotas-Valenzuela) area will no longer have to crane their necks when they stand before the desk officer.

Senior Supt. Ramon de Jesus, Northern Police District (NPD) Police Relations Office, said the elevated complaints desk in all their police stations will be taken down and replaced with one that would put the complainant "on the same level" as the officer on duty.

"It would be replaced with a desk where the complainants and the police officer could have an eye-level interaction," De Jesus said.

He said chairs will also be provided in order not to aggravate a victim's condition and frame of mind.

The order to get rid of elevated complaints desks in all Camanava stations came from NPD director Chief Supt. Raul Gonzales in line with the Philippine National Police's campaign to gain the public's trust.

De Jesus said to ensure that the complaints desk are manned by policemen who are polite and accommodating, the PNP will tap the services of a firm that trains the crew of two popular fastfood restaurants on how to deal with the public.

"Our policemen must have the correct attitude to encourage victims to learn to trust the policemen," he added.

More infra projects lined up for Navotas

MORE INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS FOR Navotas are ready to take off this year, according to Mayor Toby Tiangco.

A report from the Municipal Engineering Office showed that among the top priority projects to be implemented in the first quarter of the year are the construction of a river wall and pumping stations in Barangays Navotas East, Daanghari, San Roque, San Rafael Village and Kapitbahayan.

The pumping stations proved to be effective in Barangays Bangkulasi, Sipac-Almacen and San Jose (Vadeo Dos and Kahunari) because the flooding in these areas have eased, Tiangco noted.

The development of the Navotas Centennial Park is in full swing, together with the improvement of the town's playgrounds, parks, landscaping and installation of lights along C-4 road, the construction of Police Community Precincts along R-10 Road, repair work and improvements of classrooms in District I and II, and the Navotas Transport Terminal.

More to come

Other projects lined up are the construction of sidewalks and of the repair of the drainage canals, apart from the installation of playground equipment and the building of more basketball and volleyball courts.

METROBRIEFS

11 suspected robbers arrested in Divisoria

ULK! TAPOS NA AKO!

ILLUSTRATION: STEPH BRAVO

THE MANILA Police District (MPD) arrested 11 suspected robbers in the Divisoria area over the weekend upon the request of the Chinese-Filipino community to reduce crime in the Binondo district. The suspects were identified as Federico Arcuiza, Romel Sese, Alexander Reyes, Botchoy Balboa, Roven Casaljay, Dennis Enerillo, Antonio Lalu, Annie Gonzales, Gerald Gacula, Mila Enriquez and Luzviminda Durian. Bulaong said the MPD has started conducting character verification on the suspects to determine if they have other pending cases. "This anti-crime operation is part of our campaign to crack down on lawless criminals, including wanted persons, as part of the MPD's 'At 'Yur Serbis... Pulis na Mabilis, Opis na Malinis' and 'Safe ka sa Divisoria', programs," Bulaong said in a statement. *Margaux C. Ortiz*

Ka Popoy remembered on 5th death anniversary

WORKING class leader Filemon "Ka Popoy" Lagman was honored yesterday in simple rites held at the exact spot where he was felled five years ago by an assassin's bullet. His family and members of his party-list group, the Partido ng Manggagawa (PM), offered wreaths and lit five black candles in tribute to his memory at the steps leading to the Bahay ng Alumni building in the University of the Philippines Diliman campus. Lagman, a revolutionary socialist, was killed on Feb. 6, 2001, and became the first prominent victim of political assassination under the administration of President Macapagal-Arroyo. Albay Rep. Edcel Lagman lamented that his brother's case has yet to be solved. "When he was killed, the administration promised it would pursue his case with alacrity. Now, alacrity has taken five years," he said. If Lagman were alive today, he would likely be fighting against the antiterrorism bill and moves to amend the Constitution, the congressman added. *DJ Yap*

New book on community health nursing out

THE UP College of Nursing, in collaboration with National Book Store, will launch today the book titled "Community Health Nursing – The Basics of Practice" at the UPCN campus on Pedro Gil, Manila. The book is intended to be a textbook for nursing students and a resource book on public health nursing. It seeks to impart the what, why and how of community health nursing and provide a theoretical framework and foundation for practice for beginning community health nursing practitioners. The book was written by Salvacio G. Ballon-Reyes, a long-time public health nurse educator with extensive experience in community health nursing here and abroad. An alumna of the UP College of Nursing, Ballon-Reyes has a masters degree in public health from the Johns Hopkins University School of Hygiene and Public Health in Baltimore, Maryland, USA, and another in education fromthe UP. She also served as a consultant for the World Health Organization in Sri Lanka.

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Editor **Ester G. Dipasupil**

Wayward van kills 2 pedestrians

By DJ Yap

A WAYWARD ISUZU ELF VAN ALLEGEDLY driven by a drunk man left a trail of death and destruction in its wake in Quezon City last Sunday.

Two men were killed and at least three vehicles were damaged, as the van driven by Ruel Belo, 28, plowed through them in a series of alleged hit-and-run incidents that began at 10:30 p.m., and ended in his arrest. The van first hit an FX taxi along the Quezon Avenue underpass, but continued on its way pursued by the taxi, according to traffic police. When it reached Commonwealth Avenue, the van bumped another vehicle, this time, a white pick-up. Still, the van did not stop, Quezon City Traffic Sector 2 investigator PO3 Nicanor Joven said. He added that as the van got to the North Fairview High School, it hit Domingo Pagunuran and his uncle Eusebio Siena Jr. as they were crossing the road. Both victims died in the incident. The suspect kept driving until he rammed into a delivery van loaded with eggs in front of the Fun House Comedy Bar at the corner of Regalado Street and Mindanao Avenue Extension.

Disoriented and apparently drunk, Belo was pulled out of the van, along with his wife, cousin and nephew who sustained only minor scratches and bruises.

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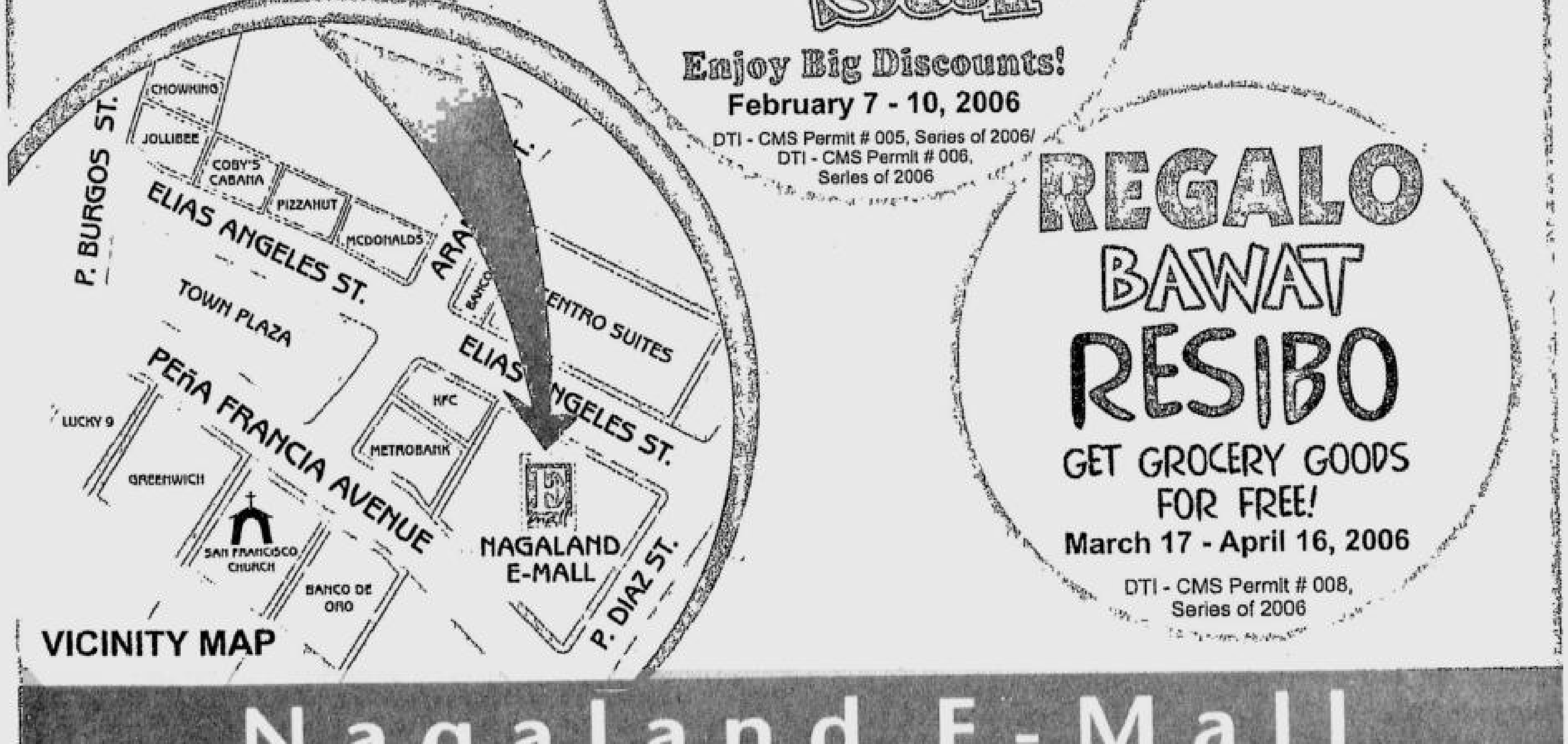

Nagaland E-Mall
Peñafrancia Ave., Cor. P. Diaz St. Naga City

Dorm 'lessees' face raps

By Tina G. Santos and Margaux C. Ortiz

THE MANILA CITY GOVERNMENT HAS FILED charges against the tenants of a two-story boardinghouse where eight people were killed in a fire last month.

Charged in the City Prosecutor's Office were Guido Montimor and his wife, Teresita, and Vicente Zarsona, the tenants of the house at 833 P. Campa Street in Sampaloc, Manila.

In the complaint-affidavit filed by City Administrator Gaudencio Nable. the three were charged with violating City Ordinance No. 4765 which prescribes the rules and regulations for the operation and maintenance of boardinghouses and dormitories in the city.

No permit

Nable said the three did not have the requisite mayor's permit for operating a boardinghouse.

A check with the city's Business Promotions and Development Bureau also showed that the tenants had no business permit.

Arson investigator FO1 Guillermo Fermalino said the Montimors had occupied the ground floor of the building for 16 years.

Zarsona, on the other hand, had rented out 16 rooms on the second floor that served as a dormitory for transients.

Transients

"The transients were mostly students who reviewed for board examinations and stayed there for a few months," Fermalino said.

Zarsona and her family reportedly went to their home in the province shortly after the incident.

He added that Zarsona also owned the kitchen on the first floor where the fire originated.

Other tenants

"The Montimor family, on the other hand, leased out a portion of the area to a water refilling station," Fermalino said.

The building is owned by the heirs of Juan Manahan who had rented out the building to the three tenants.

According to the arson investigator, the Manahan family, represented by the Bernas Law Office, told the Manila Fire Department that their contract with Montimor and Zarsona had "specified that the latter should not lease out the property to other tenants."

Not so fast

"But the heirs of Juan Manahan are not yet off the hook," Fermalino told the INQUIRER in a phone interview, explaining that the owners had the responsibility to check on their tenants.

"It is appalling if they had not inspected their properties for that long a period," he said.

Of the eight persons killed in the Jan. 8 fire, two were women. Seven of those who were killed shared a room on the second floor.

About 12 families lived in the boardinghouse, apart from other tenants who occupied 17 rooms on the second floor.

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SMB swaps Belasco for Cablay

By June Navarro

SAN MIGUEL BEER FOUND another crack guard and Alaska another power forward after the Beermen traded Nic Belasco for Brandon Cablay yesterday.

The Aces also shipped rookie center Mark Kong to SMB as part of the deal, which was confirmed by Alaska team manager Joaqui Trillo yesterday.

SMB coach Jong Uichico said Cablay will be groomed as understudy of top playmaker Olsen Racela who, at 35, is considered near the twilight of a career that helped Uichico win six Philippine Basketball Association titles.

"But we still don't know how Brandon will fit in until we see him in practice," said Uichico, who also has point guards Denver Lopez, Anton Villoria and rookie Paolo Hubalde at his disposal.

BELASCO: Maturity and experience

CABLAY: Perfect backup for Racela

Belasco, a tough defender and rebounder with a respectable three-point shooting touch, joins an Alaska squad already loaded with talent up front.

Aside from Don Allado and Reynel Hugnatan, the Aces also boast Joachim Thoss, Tony dela Cruz and 2005 Rookie of the Year Rich Alvarez.

"We were looking for maturity and a more experienced player while San Miguel now has a young and quick point guard," said Trillo. "I think Nic will gladly fit in."

A first-rounder in the 2003 draft, Cablay, the slam dunk champion in 2004, was actually San Miguel's top choice before it was beaten by the Aces, who made the Hawaii-raised playmaker the fifth overall pick.

"We're all right with him (Cablay), but Nic's absence will definitely create a big dent on our frontline rotation," said Uichico.

With a hulking 6-foot-7 frame, Kong can be groomed to fill the void left by Belasco. But it will take time before the former Letran and Adamson University behemoth could be relied upon.

On the Aces' end, the departure of Cablay will leave Mike Cortez, Jeffrey Cariaso and the seldom-used Stephen Padilla to keep the Alaska backcourt competitive.

The lack of a veteran frontliner and an effective import led the Aces to an early exit in the Fiesta Conference after Red Bull swept them in their quarterfinal series.

San Miguel also got booted out by a younger and fresher Air21 Express in their wild card encounter.

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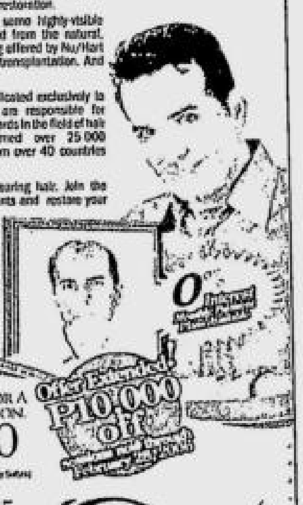

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Giants tough, if not tougher, says Guiao

GAMES TOMORROW (*Araneta Coliseum*)
4:40 p.m.—Air21 vs Ginebra (for third place)
7:35 p.m.—Purefoods vs Red Bull

DESPITE HAVING SURVIVED A TOUGH Barangay Ginebra squad backed by the majority of the 16,438 crowd, Red Bull coach Yeng Guiao still thinks the worst is far from over.

"Playing against Ginebra is like being on another planet," Guiao said yesterday during the pre-finals media briefing at the Barrio Fiesta on UN Avenue in Manila. "But it doesn't mean things will be easy for us in the finals."

The Bulls finally eliminated the Kings Sunday, 83-79, to advance against the well-rested Purefoods Chunkee Giants starting Wednesday in another best-of-seven series for the title.

"Purefoods has a different style which is far from Ginebra's brand of play so we have to use a different strategy this time," said Guiao.

While Ginebra's strength lies on the post, the Giants rely mostly on their outside gunners, led by prolific import Marquin Chandler.

The Giants finished off the Air21 Express in six games while the Bulls had to go through the wringer of a Game 7 against the Kings.

Purefoods coach Ryan Gregorio, however, doesn't believe his Giants possess any edge despite coming off a five-day respite.

"It helps but it's quite different in the championship," said Gregorio. "It's a long series and teams have more time to fine-tune their strategy and adjust to every situation."

But compared with the Giants, the Bulls will have a rougher time adjusting.

"We did not have practice today, but we have to make adjustments in defense," said Guiao. "That's tougher for us, re-orienting our defense in just one day's time."

June Navarro

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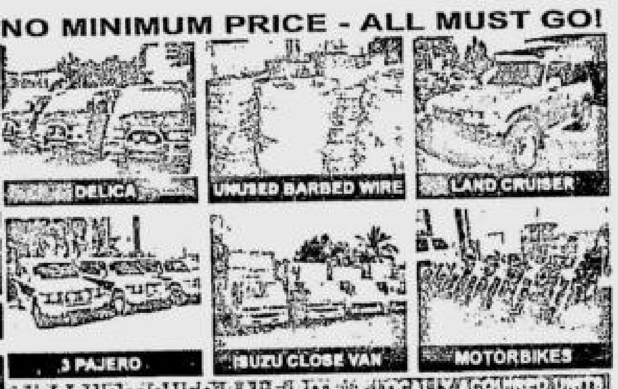

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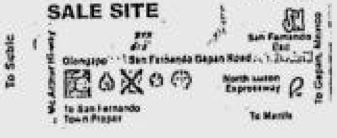

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National Prisaa Games get going in Lingayen

By Yolanda Sotelo-Fuertes
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

LINGAYEN, PANGASINAN—THE PRIVATE SCHOOLS Athletic Association (Prisaa) National Games opened here yesterday with President Macapagal-Arroyo as guest of honor and speaker.

Addressing more than 5,000 athletes, guests and school officials, Ms Arroyo exhorted the schools to produce more athletes who can compete internationally.

"We celebrate Manny Pacquiao," Ms Arroyo told the delegates from the country's 16 regions at the Narciso Ramos Sports and Civic Center here. "We celebrate the Southeast Asian Games (winners). Now we celebrate the private schools."

According to Prisaa national chair Dr. Emmanuel Angeles, a total of 3,495 athletes are vying in 13 events to be held in this capital town, Binmaley and the cities of Dagupan, Alaminos and San Carlos. It is the first time in 53 years that Ilocos region is hosting the Prisaa Games.

Another highlight of the opening rites was the presentation of awards of recognition to Prisaa athletes who competed and won in last year's 23rd SEAG, where the Philippines emerged as overall champion.

Prisaa national president and vice chair of the board Dr. Gonzalo Duque gave the opening remarks while Lingayen Mayor Ernesto Castañeda, Dagupan City Mayor Benjamin Lim, Rep. Amado Espino Jr. and Pangasinan Gov. Victor Agbayani also delivered messages.

Ms Arroyo said her administration wants to keep the private schools alive "so we are giving vouchers to students who want to enrol in private schools."

Under the administration's P35-billion pump priming program, P500 million has been allocated for scholarships. A student can avail of a P4,000-voucher each year to pay for his or her schooling in private school.

Ms Arroyo handed out 50 vouchers each to elementary schools in Cabayaooasan, Mangatarem, Poguruac, Burgos; Maticmatic, Sta. Barbara, Dulag, Binmaley and Duyong, Calasiao.

PBL MVP

Hard work pays off for Tangkay

By Jasmine W. Payo

DISAPPOINTMENTS CAME APLENTY DEspite a promising career.

Yet Jojo Tangkay vowed to work harder and expect nothing after a forgettable stint in the pros. Worse, he was sidelined by an ACL injury.

Back in the amateur ranks, the Rain or Shine forward absorbed some more heartbreak. He narrowly lost in a controversial race for the Most Valuable Player award in the 2004 Platinum Cup.

But at 29, Tangkay showed that it's never too late to start all over.

Last Sunday, the 6-foot-1 cager bagged the MVP plum in the PBL Heroes Cup.

"I didn't expect to win the MVP this time because in the past conferences, I had big expectations of getting the award," said Tangkay in Filipino. "But I guess it (the MVP award) wasn't really meant for me then."

Hours after receiving the top individual honor, the conference title was also within Tangkay's reach after the Elasto Painters edged the Magnolia Wizards in Game 2 of the Finals series.

Rain or Shine will shoot for a sweep in Game 3 of the best-of-five series on Thursday.

The Painters claimed Game 1 after a thrilling 70-68 overtime win last Thursday. Three days later, the seasoned squad again proved steadier down the stretch to score a 75-73 decision.

"My next goal is to win the championship for my team," said Tangkay, who captured the MVP plum with 344.80 total points after topping the statistical points and the player-media votes.

He was was also named to the Mythical Five along with Jason Castro of Hapee-PCU (275.62 points), Magnolia's Kelly Williams (239.03) and Arwind Santos (235.63), and teammate Jay-R Reyes (224.06).

The league also honored Harbour Centre's Rob Reyes (223.90) and Joseph Yeo (218.28), Hapee-PCU's Gabby Espinas (222.97) and Robert Sanz (202.73) and Toyota Otis' Joe Devance (217.92) as members of the All-PBL second team.

JOJO Tangkay (left) shows it's never too late to shine again. EDWIN BACASMAS

Olympic body to summon tablenet head

By Marc Anthony Reyes

THE PHILIPPINE OLYMPIC COMMITTEE WILL summon table tennis chief Vic Valbuena to explain his side on accusations made by former secretary general Oscar Santilices that he was elected illegally.

POC secretary general Steven Hontiveros said Valbuena's explanation is needed before the Olympic body can form a committee that will decide the merits of the case.

"Right now we have to give everybody a chance to explain," said Hontiveros of Valbuena, who was sworn in by no less than the POC president Peping Cojuangco recently.

He added that the case doesn't have to be decided by the general assembly or by the arbitration body headed by POC chair Robert Aventajado.

Santilices, who claims to have the backing of some regional directors and other officials of the Table Tennis Association of the Philippines (Tatap) as well as players, claimed that Valbuena was fraudulently elected to a new term. Santilices pointed out that, among other things, Tatap is no longer registered with the Securities and Exchange Commission.

But Valbuena has denied this and instead accused Santilices of getting back at him following his sacking from Tatap two years ago.

Konica connection

SPECTATOR

Al S. Mendoza

THE CONNECTION BETWEEN GERARD Cantada and Konica Minolta is golf.

So, beginning today, Gerard, the former junior standout who is now a successful golf teacher, and Konica Minolta, the world leader in digital imaging, renew their bond on the fairways of the Riviera Golf Club in Silang, Cavite—today being the Celebrity Tournament of the Konica Minolta National Pro-Am set Feb. 8-11 at Riviera's Langer.

"In all my victories here and around the world," Gerard says, "the ones at Konica Minolta are the most memorable."

Gerard and his amateur partner, JR Tanpinco, won the tournament back-to-back in 2003 and 2005 (the event wasn't held in 2004).

Of all sports, it is in golf that one finds it most difficult to win the same tournament back-to-back. Well, difficult but achievable.

But three wins in a row?

"Almost impossible, but probable," Gerard says.

Nick Faldo won the Masters back to back in 1989 and 1990. He lost in 1991.

Tomorrow, Gerard and JR will embark on that probable mission of winning the Konica Minolta National Pro-Am, now staking a record P1.7 million, three in a row.

"JR and I are all set for that dream," Gerard says. "May God help us."

* * *

When coach Yeng Guiao of Red Bull starts his quest for another PBA crown tomorrow against Purefoods, he will have two players in mind: Celino Cruz and James Penny. The duo nailed the shots—back to back at that—that ousted Ginebra San Miguel, the favored one to make it to the finals. The shots were three-pointers that pushed Red Bull to the best-of-seven finals in the San Mig Coffee-PBA Fiesta Conference.

Celino's triple from the left came after a brilliant screen given him by teammate Enrico Villanueva. Penny's was also pressure-packed, coming two shoes away from the key, while the seconds were ticking away.

Red Bull was down, 73-75, when Cruz sank the trey for a 76-75 Bulls advantage. Seconds later, Penny drilled another trey that made it 79-75, 47 seconds left in the game.

From there, Ginebra simply couldn't recall its vaunted never-say-die spirit and went down in defeat after leveling the series, 3-3, from 1-3.

Had Ginebra pulled it out of the fire, it would have duplicated that improbable feat in 1991 when it rallied from 1-3 to beat Shell in a tumultuous Game 7 finals through a last-second jumper by Rudy Distrito.

Distrito is now in jail in America undergoing trial for murder, but that is another story.

* * *

The victory of Crystal Shin, a 14-year-old from Taego, South Korea, last week in the 43rd Southern Ladies Golf Tournament at Del Monte in Manolo Fortich, Bukidnon, takes the form of a Cinderella story if only because it was her first time to join the tournament.

But more than that is the manner with which she won it.

Playing scratch, she won it by a rout. After tying 2004 champion Lora Roberto for the first-round lead with similar 4-under-par scores, the Korean pulled away by firing 6-under in the second round and capping her first-ever tournament with a 3-under on the final day for a 54-hole total of 13-under. Lora placed second, way, way behind.

It was the first victory ever by a foreigner in the NGAP-organized tournament held annually since 1963. And it came with the bulk of the national women's training pool in attendance, although the country's No. 1, Jayvie Agojo, and 2005 Philippine Amateur champion Frances Bondad weren't around due to their schooling—Jayvie in America and Frances in Australia.

"Hard work was the key to my victory," said Crystal Shin, who arrived at Del Monte in November and went on a training regimen under Peter Miñoza where she woke up at 5 a.m. from Monday to Sunday to practice up to 6 p.m.

I'll write more about the kid later. *Ciao!*

* * *

FASTBREAK. Thank you also to Maribel San Miguel and Mike Comique, fixtures both of Del Monte Pineapple Philippines in Manolo Fortich, Bukidnon, for making our visit in Del Monte Golf Club last week a most pleasant and memorable one as usual.

* * *

Comments to menju@pldtdsl.net

Kimoni Badminton Tour starts Feb. 18

LIM-IT: Big series

BADMINTON GETS ANOTHER major boost with Kimoni, a fledgling Japanese company involved in manufacturing equipment and other gear for the sport, organizing a nationwide series starting next week covering the hot spots of the local shuttlecock boom.

The Kimoni Badminton Tour 2006 will visit eight key cities for a series of eliminations starting Feb. 18-19 at the Smash Power Badminton Club in Pampanga. The top finishers will advance to the Battle of Champions at the Market! Market! at The Fort in July.

Response to the Tour has been overwhelming, according to Billy Lim-It, chief executive officer of Kimoni Philippines. He said this may even go beyond the company's vision of providing a high-caliber competition for players in all skill levels.

"We believe that this Tour will become a legitimate ground for a talent search which will open doors to Filipino players who dream of making it big in the game," said Lim-It.

The tourney features competition in men's doubles, ladies doubles and mixed doubles. Members or former mainstays of the national training pool and varsity players cannot join.

While there is an age requirement of at least 21 years old, organizers have included a junior division for the 16-20 age bracket.

The Pampanga leg gets going after the completion of the leveling over the weekend.

The rest of the eliminations schedule: March 4-5 Shuttlers' Haven Badminton Courts, Bacolod City; March 18-19 4Play Badminton Court, Davao City; April 8-9 Tacloban Extreme Badminton Club, Tacloban City; April 22-23 Butuan City; May 13-14 Portside Badminton Plaza, Mandaue City; May 27-28 Shuttle Zone Badminton Court, Kidapawan City; June 3-4 Cagayan de Oro; July 1,2, 8 and 9 Olympic Badminton Club, Quezon City.

For inquiries, call MindWorks through Willy Agbulos (0917-8419835) or Gary Tulio (0917-7961345/0922-8134399.

Carlos, Sawit rule Alabang's Mango Tee

ROLANDO CARLOS AND SIMON SAWIT EXPLODED for a whopping 90 points in their second and final round to emerge as overall champion in the 22nd Mango Tee Invitational member-guest golf tournament of the Alabang Country Club over the weekend.

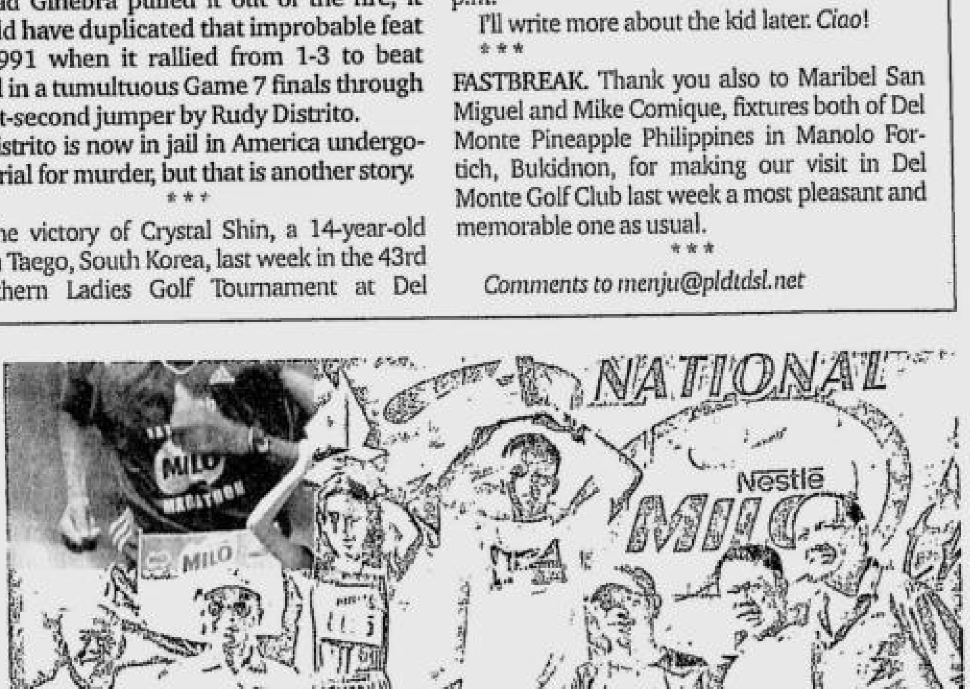
Carlos and Sawit, who started out in 12th place after the first round with 77 points, finished with a 167 total to turn back Air21 president Lito Alvarez and his partner Rudy Fulo by just a stroke for the top award.

Alvarez and Fulo had to settle for the Class D crown, sharing honors with four other tandems, including the father-and-son tandem of Tommy and Matthew Manotoc who took the low gross title in the tourney co-presented by Smart Communications and Pilipinas Shell.

The Manotocs, firing a 70 in the first day, won by a point despite closing out with a measly 56.

Hanson So senior and junior, failing in their bid to become the second father-and-son team to win the overall trophy after Danny and Eddie Boy Sarmiento did the trick in 1997, took the Class A crown; Art Zuluaga and Francisco Banawa won in Class B and Alex Capanzana-Albert Pasiliao prevailed in Class C.

"This tournament will be remembered for the way teams won their trophies in extremely difficult playing conditions," said ACCI president Paul Cortez, who joined chief organizer Cid Diomampo, Ed Chua of Shell and Julie Carceller of Smart in the awards ceremony.



FINALS-BOUND: Gin Adan and Joseph Penales (third and fourth from left), winners of the Tagbilaran City 21K run of the 30th Milo Marathon, raise their trophies during the awards rites Sunday. With them are (from left) Bohol provincial board member Dionesio Balite, Gov. Erico Aumentado, PSC commissioner Ambrosio de Luna, Milo Sports Events executive Pat Goc-ong and Vice Gov. Julius Caesar Herrera. Adan and Penales, as well the second and third placers in the men's and women's races, made it to the National Finals in Metro Manila on Dec. 10.

Konica Celeb Pro-Am begins

WITH A TOYOTA INNOVA AS TOP prize, the celebrity tournament of the Konica Minolta National Pro-Am will be held today at Riviera's Langer course in Silang, Cavite.

The Innova will be staked as a hole-in-one prize on hole No. 4, according to retired commodore Danny Pizarro, chair of the organizing committee and head of the Riviera Golf Club.

A star-studded field will play in the event organized by the National Golf Association of the Philippines. The tourney precedes the Konica Minolta National Pro-Am tomorrow backed by the U-Bix Corp. of businessman Bert Bravo.

Some 110 teams are entered in the 72-hole event which stakes a record pot of P1.7 million chiefly through Japan's Konica Minolta Business Technologies Corp.

SPORTSWATCH

Yap-Leyba entry tops Candelaria hackfest

THE ENTRY OF BENNY YAP AND R. LEYBA SCORED PERFECT SEVEN points to top the P7 million 36th annual Candelaria 7-cock derby. The event, which opened last January and sponsored by Thunderbird, was a promotion of the Iloilo Sportsmen Inc. with Iloilo Colieum GM Chito Tinsay running the show. Respected breeder Sonny Lagon, who celebrated his birthday during the finals, came a point short of sharing the top honors.

Roligon anniversary derby semis under way

THE SEMIFINAL ROUND OF ROLIGON MEGA COCKPIT'S 16TH ANNIVERSARY 6-Cock Derby kicks off at 2 p.m. today with 119 fights lined up. Seeing action in the round are participants who did not score and those who scored 0.5 and 1 point in the eliminations. Participants who score four wins in the semifinals will share the bonus prize of P600,000. The championship round will start at 10 a.m. on Thursday. The guaranteed prize is P4 million, plus a Toyota Innova for the fastest-win champion. For inquiries, call 851-2275, 833-1638 or 852-9812.

WTJ special cockfest weigh-in today

COCKERS AND BREEDERS SEEING ACTION IN THE WTJ SPECIAL 3-COCK DERby tomorrow at the Makati Coliseum are reminded to present their entries today at the venue. Weight limits are 1.8 kilograms to 2.4 kg. in the P200,000 derby backed by B-Meg Derby Ace Premium Formula. Entry fee is P5,500. For inquiries, call 896-3545 or 895-6475. Fourty-two entries vied in the first WTJ 3-cocker on Jan. 30, and six emerged as co-champions: Palasan Secret of Jun Pascual, Janelle of E.R. Bentong, Singkamas Pride of Pete Yson, Practice Lang of Efren Canlas, Together Again of Pepito Ngo and the Be Nice entry.

RACING

BY TOP CHOICE

Race 1—(Qrt/Tri)—Player's Twist (2), Cunning Eagle (5), My Little Pet (4), Magic Ewan Ko (6)
Race 2—(Qrt/Tri)—Miss Malabon (5), Rich And Famous (2), Cool Goddess (1), Pretty Pretty Girl
Race 3—(Penta/Tri)—Carbo's Fancy/Starry Night (2), Top Most (8), Big Boss (6), Red Hot Water (7), Original (4)
Race 4—(Qrt/Tri)—Dona Nena/Santiago (4), Trish Connection (6), Allysa's Choice (2), Indian Boy (7)
Race 5—(Penta/Tri)—Ronzie's Stays (9) Sweet Talk (3), Friendly Venture (4), Lucky Joe (10), Esperikitik (13)
Race 6—(Qrt/Tri)—C'est Moi (8), Modern Classic (7), Streisand (4), Once And For All (9)
Race 7—(Penta/Tri)—Mesmorize (9), Lakambini (8), Carolina Bollo (7), Golden Issue (10), Eden's Quest (4).
Race 8—Super 6/Qrt/Tri)—All Powerful/He's A Balong (9), Seeing Red (13), Wild Orphan (6), West N Wild (2), Rose and Toy (4), Gutsy (1)

Steelers steal Super Bowl 40

Pittsburgh ends 26-year drought with record 5th crown

DETROIT, MICHIGAN—PITTSBURGH ENDed a 26-year title drought and completed the most unlikely championship run in American football history here Sunday, beating Seattle, 21-10, in Super Bowl 40.

Ben Roethlisberger and Willie Parker ran for touchdowns and Most Valuable Player Hines Ward caught a 43-yard trick-play touchdown toss from fellow receiver Antwaan Randle El as the Steelers won a record-tying fifth Super Bowl.

The Steelers were the first sixth seed to reach the Super Bowl after road upsets of top American Conference seeds Indianapolis, Denver and Cincinnati, then ended an amazing playoff run by downing the National Conference's kings.

"To win after nobody thought we could - sixth seed, three playoff games on the road - was more special than if we had won last year when we were the cream of the crop," Steelers safety Chris Hope said.

Pittsburgh matched Dallas and San Francisco for the all-time record of five Super Bowl triumphs, giving tearful coach Bill Cowher and rusher Jerome Bettis their first National Football League titles in more than a decade of trying.

Bettis, nicknamed "The Bus" for his stocky frame, parked himself for good after 13 seasons, having won a long-sought crown in his hometown. The number five all-time NFL rusher's retirement is "official like the referee's whistle." "There's always a time when you have to call it quits," Bettis said. "It is an ending. It has been an incredible ride. I came back to win a championship. Mission accomplished. Now I have to bid farewell.

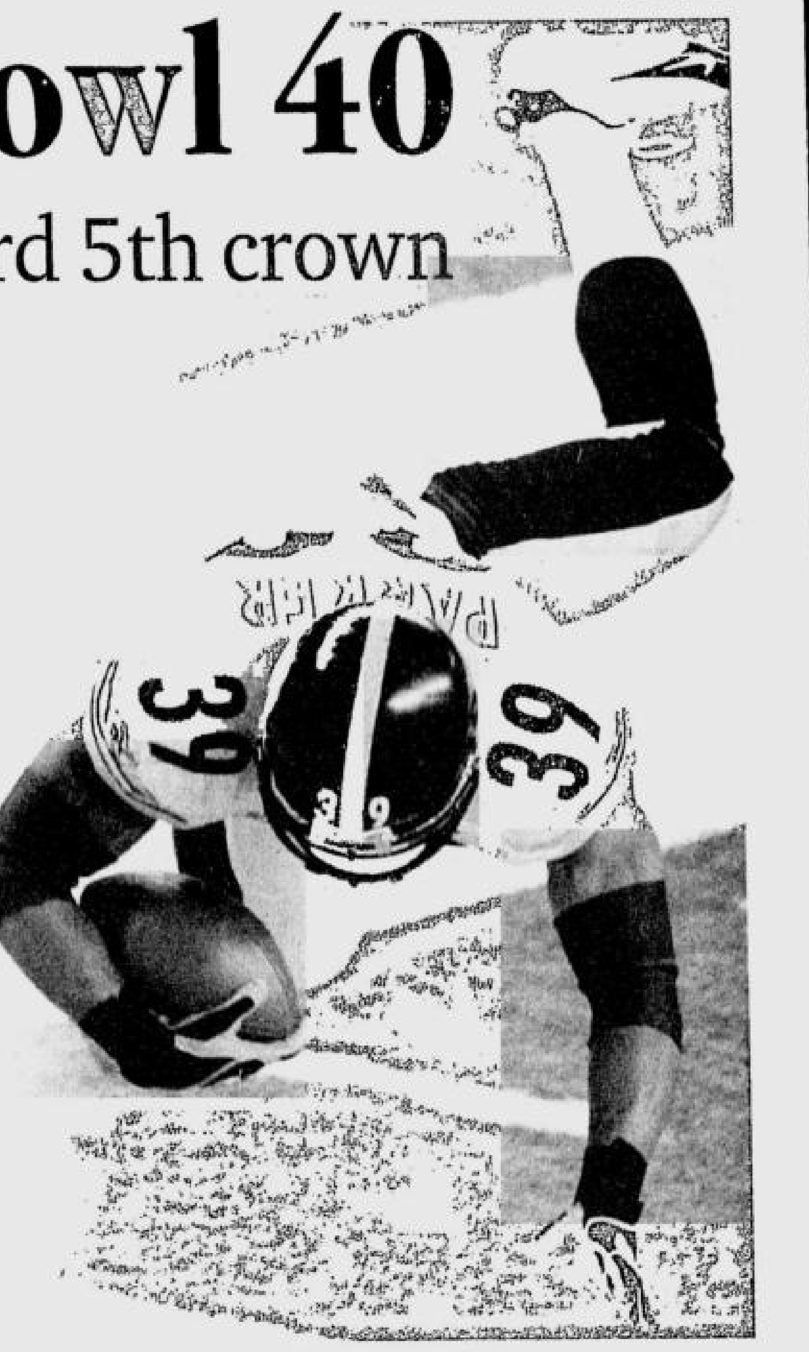
Roethlisberger, who dove for a one-yard touchdown, became the youngest quarterback to win a Super Bowl. "Big Ben" improved to 27-4 as a starter despite the worst passer rating for a Super Bowl winner.

Only four NFL coaches had won more games than Cowher without winning a Super Bowl. His 14 years with the Steelers is the longest active NFL run by a coach with the same club.

The Steelers won in 1975, 1976, 1979 and 1980 but lost in 1996 to Dallas in Cowher's only prior Super Bowl.

Parker scored on a 75-yard run, the longest rushing play in Super Bowl history, and the Steeler defense shut down the NFL's top scoring offense and top rusher Shaun Alexander in Seattle's first Super Bowl appearance.

"Losing the Super Bowl is always going to be tough. It's always going to hurt, but at the same time be proud that you took Seattle to a play it had never been before," Seahawks coach Mike Holmgren told his team. *AFP*



STEELERS' Willie Parker dives into the endzone to score a touchdown on a 75-yard run against the Seahawks, tthe longest run from scrimmage in Super Bowl history. REUTERS

MVP: Dream come true for Ward

JEROME Bettis (right) holds the Vince Lombardi trophy while Hines Ward holds his son. AFP

DETROIT—HINES WARD MADE THE BIG plays when it counted on Sunday to earn the Super Bowl XL Most Valuable Player award.

Ward hauled in five passes for 123 yards, including a 43-yard touchdown reception from wide receiver Antwaan Randle El, as the Steelers beat the Seattle Seahawks 21-10 to claim their fifth Super Bowl championship.

Ward became the fourth Steeler to win Super Bowl MVP honors after Franco Harris (1975), Lynn Swann (1976) and Terry Bradshaw (1979 and 1980).

"For me to get this honor solidified my career," Ward said. "From where I came from and how I got to this point, it's a special feeling.

"I am at a loss for words," he added. "There have been a lot of great MVP's who have won the Super Bowl.

"And for me to have my name mentioned among some of the MVPs that played in the Super Bowl, words can't describe it.

"It's totally a dream come true."

Ward's touchdown reception from Randle El, who played quarterback in college, put daylight between the two teams and snuffed out the Seahawk's momentum in the fourth quarter.

Hines, who won a Cadillac Escalade as well as the MVP trophy, was born in Seoul, South Korea and was the team's third round draft pick in 1998 out of Georgia. *Reuters*

Pacquiao: Pinoy 'Cinderella Man'

ABOUT 15 YEARS AGO, A MANILA-bound ship was unknowingly carrying with it a priceless national treasure that had yet to be unveiled then: A 12-year-old stowaway with an unusually strong left hand and a head filled with big dreams.

"I wanted to be a world champion," the now world famous sporting icon said, recalling his thoughts during the wave-tossed voyage.

Fifteen years after that fateful journey, Manny Pacquiao has fulfilled his dreams. And more.

> From a lowly **'panadero'** to a multimillionaire at 27, Pacquiao has truly been an **inspiration** to millions

Using his left hand as a calling card, Pacquiao slowly rose in the world boxing ranks, sending rivals crumpling down to the canvass and pocketing millions in prize money.

Not bad for someone who had to quit school in sixth grade to try to help a fatherless family make ends meet.

"He was a bright student but didn't finish school because of poverty," says Jognard Verzoza, who went to elementary school with Pacquiao. "You could tell how poor his family was by his clothes."

Today, you can tell how rich he is by the luxuries he enjoys. Aside from hundreds of millions in prize money and tens of millions more from television profit slices, Pacquiao also has his pockets lined with endorsement money.

The latest comes from the region's biggest food and beverage conglomerate in a blockbuster deal that will soon make him one of the country's wealthiest athletes.

From a lowly "panadero" (baker's hand) to a multimillionaire at 27, Pacquiao has truly been an inspiration to millions who see in him hope and a reprieve from the drudgery of life in the Philippines. Thus, it isn't a stretch to call him the Filipino "Cinderella Man."

Born in crushing poverty on Dec. 12, 1978, Emmanuel D. Pacquiao grew up in a one-room shanty in a coastal village in Gen. Santos City in war-torn Mindanao.

His parents separated when he was young, and his mother, Dionisia, had to support six children with her paltry income from a series of odd jobs. Pacquiao helped out by selling bread and taking in laundry.

Pacquiao reached sixth grade and then dropped out because his family was too poor to keep him in school. His mother wanted him to be a priest, but he had other plans.

Pacquiao fled GenSan at age 12 to pursue his dream to be a boxer, stowing away on a ship bound for Manila.

PACQUIAO: Has his pockets lined with endorsement money.

Supporting himself initially as a construction worker and by hustling at pool halls and basketball courts, he never lost sight of his goal. And he rose quickly in the amateur and pro-boxing circuit.

With his recent win over three-time world champion Erik Morales of Mexico, Pacquiao is now ranked the top contender and is now eligible to face Marco Antonio Barrera, the man he beat by an 11th round TKO in 2003, again for the WBC superfeatherweight title.

With his earnings, Pacquiao can well afford to retire from boxing.

Pacquiao confesses he has been thinking of life outside the boxing ring but, for now, his priority has been to set his finances in order and secure his family's future. He has purchased a P3-million home in General Santos, a condominium unit in Davao, another house in Parañaque and a gamecock breeding farm.

While he allows himself some luxuries (he has a Honda SUV, a Ford Expedition, a Toyota Tamaraw and, his latest acquisition, a Porsche Cayenne worth millions), Pacquiao also makes sure his newfound wealth trickles down to as many people a man of his status can afford to help.

On his 26th birthday, for instance, he distributed thousands of gift packs to those who visited his home.

For now, most of his earnings are managed by his wife, Jinkee, and the lady of the house keeps a large part of the money in a bank.

The couple recently decided to open a retail store named after Pacquiao's boxing monicker, "The Pacman," but that initial venture into "mom-and-pop" entrepreneurship is getting a big helping hand from another proud Philippine institution, San Miguel Corp.

Pacquiao has signed a deal that will see him carry the standard for San Miguel. He has agreed to do a series of commercials for the company, appearing as a talent in ads promoting San Miguel Beer and Magnolia Ice Cream.

"Manny's image fits very well with our values in San Miguel, particularly the passion for success," San Miguel president and chief operating officer Ramon S. Ang said. "We are proud to have Manny as our partner in bringing to the market products that are well-loved by consumers."

Beyond the endorsement deal, Pacquiao is also set make his initial foray into big business, as he enters into a product distribution deal with San Miguel.

Indeed, this slugger has come a long way in a life journey that began as a stowaway.

Rockets' blast downs Knicks

NEW YORK—TRACY MCGRADY SCORED 23 points and David Wesley added 19, including several key free throws late, to lead the Houston Rockets to a 93-89 win over the struggling New York Knicks on Sunday.

Yao Ming, in his fourth game back since missing 21 after toe surgery, looked to have shaken off any lingering effects of the injury and had 15 points. Houston's record is 12-6 when he and McGrady play.

With both its stars healthy, Houston has won three straight for the first time since it captured five in a row from Dec. 6-15.

The Knicks had a chance to tie with 6.9 seconds left, but a 3-pointer by Jalen Rose was partially blocked by Stromile Swift and fell short.

Rose scored 16 points and received a warm reception from the crowd in his debut with the Knicks after being traded from Toronto on Friday. Jamal Crawford scored 24 points and Eddy Curry had 15 for the Knicks, who have lost five straight and 11 of the last 12.

In Toronto, Elton Brand scored 30 points, Sam Cassell added 27, and the Los Angeles Clippers moved 11 games over .500 for the first time in team history with a 115-113 overtime victory over the Toronto Raptors.

Cassell sent the game into overtime with a 3-pointer and scored six points in the extra period.

In Sacramento, California, Mike Bibby scored 23 points, Kevin Martin added 20 and Sacramento hit more than enough field goals in the fourth quarter to beat Utah, 96-78. *AP*

SOLAR SPORTS will air the 10 a.m.—Minnesota-Phoenix tussle at 10 a.m. It will be replayed at 8 p.m.

Tiger thrives in the desert

DUBAI, UNITED ARAB EMIRATES—TIGER Woods has thrived in overtime this season.

Two shots behind with two holes to play, Woods drove the green on the 359-yard 17th hole to set up a birdie-birdie finish that got him into a playoff, where he defeated Ernie Els on the first extra hole Sunday to win the Dubai Desert Classic.

Two tournaments, two continents, two playoff victories.

"I couldn't ask for anything more than that," said Woods, who hasn't started a season with two victories since his record-setting year in 2000. "Two playoffs, too. Very stressful, but I was somehow able to come out on top. I was very fortunate today."

It was similar to last week in San Diego, where Woods birdied the final hole to get into a playoff at the Buick Invitational and won with pars when his opponents made mistakes.

Els also birdied the last hole with a 6-foot putt. But on the par-5 18th hole in the playoff, he pulled his tee shot into the sandy grove of palms, and his approach came up about a yard short into the water. He took a drop and pitched 20 feet beyond the hole, missing his par putt.

Woods closed with a 3-under 69, finishing with a birdie from behind the 18th green in regulation to join Els at 19-under 269. Richard Green of Australia birdied four of five holes down the stretch to take the lead, but he drove into a plugged lie in the sandy palm grove and took bogey on the 18th.

Els shot 5-under 67, but the ending was all too familiar. It was the third time he has lost in a playoff to Woods, and the seventh time the 36-year-old South African has finished second to Woods. *AP*

Ex-boxers' trust fund going, going, gone?

CLEAN LIVING

Manolo R. Iñigo

I AGREE WITH THE OBSERVATION OF veteran television journalist Julius Babao of ABS-CBN's TV Patrol and MUP fame that many of the country's former boxers are in dire need of financial help, citing in particular Rolando Navarette, the ex-world junior lightweight champion, who is now impoverished and always gets into trouble.

In his column in the tabloid Bulgar, Babao cited an urgent appeal from the cash-strapped Games and Amusements Board for more monetary contribution to the Disabled Boxers' Trust Fund, which is now running low.

"The disabled boxers' fund is down to only P600,000," Babao quoted his sources at the GAB as saying. "There are more than 100 ex-boxers who are asking for financial help and we simply could not accommodate all of them, that's why the GAB is appealing to influential politicians, including sports patron First Gentleman Mike Arroyo, for financial assistance to boost the boxers' trust fund."

I have no problem with that appeal for contribution because that is one way of increasing the badly depleted boxers' trust fund and helping our long suffering prizefighters. It has also been suggested that another way of raising more money for the trust fund is by reviving the PSA Fiesta Fistiana. But since I have already sort of lost my love for pro boxing, I am passing off this suggestion to those who are in a better position to help like the Philippine Sportswriters Association headed by Jimmy Cantor of Malaya, GAB chair Eric Buhain, longtime manager-promoter Gov. Raul Daza of the Philippine Boxing Association, international promoter Jun Sarreal and Rex Wakee Salud, a close buddy of Manny Pacquiao.

An annual boxing event very much popular in the 1960s, the Fiesta Fistiana is a tax-free charity card for the benefit of destitute and disabled Filipino boxers. The great Gabriel "Flash" Elorde used to regularly appear in the Fistiana and donated a portion of his purses to the boxers' fund.

Dormant for several years, the Fistiana was revived by the PSA on Nov. 9, 1996, with the backing of Speaker Jose de Venecia, then Senior Deputy Speaker and now Northern Samar Gov. Raul Daza, former GAB chair Dominador Cepeda, lawyer Rudy Salud, then Philippine Sports Commission chair Philip Ella Juico, veteran radioman Ben Aniceto, the late Armando Besa of the Philippine Boxing Association, lawyer-CPA Antonio Lucero and the accountants of Sycip Gorres Velayo and Co. who audited the Fistiana proceeds for free.

A huge financial success, the Fistiana raised more than P800,000 for the Disabled Filipino Trust Fund. But more importantly, by submitting itself to an audit, the PSA set a good example for all fund-raisers. The SGV audit elicited a favorable response from all sectors, including the PSA's generous sponsors, among them San Miguel Corp., Pagcor, PLDT, former Manila Mayor and now Sen. Alfredo Lim, Philippine Airlines, Ernie Yu's Family Rubbing Alcohol, Hotel Rembrandt and Hotel Dusit Nikko.

Rico Siodora of Cagayan de Oro pounded out a sensational 11th round TKO of highly favored American champion Cedric Mingo to wrest the World Boxing Federation featherweight crown in the top bout of the Fistiana. No less than President Fidel V. Ramos joined a capacity crowd who watched the fights at the Ninoy Aquino Stadium.

Among the needy ex-boxers who received financial assistance were former World Boxing Council junior lightweight champ Rolando Navarette, three-time world title contender Pretty Boy Lucas, the late WBC junior welterweight title-holder Pedro Adigue, Fred Basa, Benjamin Carillo, Rey Tam, Dommy Ursua, Al Asuncion, Leonardo Gueguira a.k.a. Leo Zulueta; Tito Abella, Ben Escobar, Tito Zardo, Winnie Galero, Mario Arispe and Monico Gallego.

In their independent financial report, SGV accountants said in part: "We have audited the statement of cash receipts and disbursements of the 1996 Fiesta Fistiana. We conducted our audit in accordance with generally accepted auditing standards. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statement is free of material misstatement.

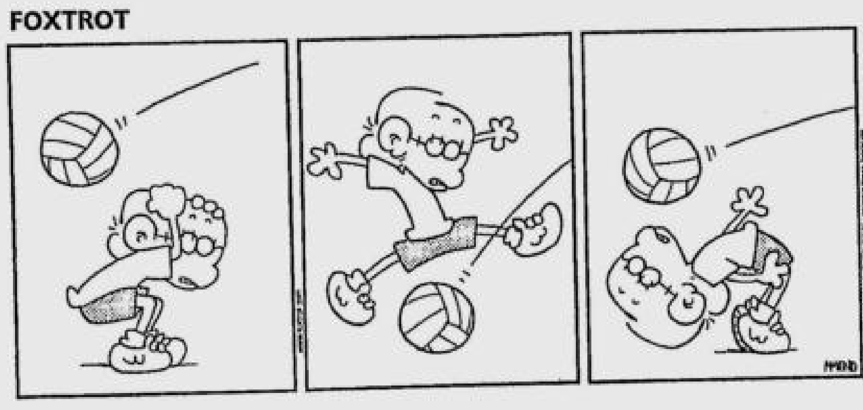
"In our opinion, the statement referred to presents fairly, in all material respects, the statement of cash receipts and disbursements of the 1996 Fiesta Fistiana, as carried in the accounts maintained by the Fund."

ComicRelief

e-mail feedback at arts@inquirer.com.ph

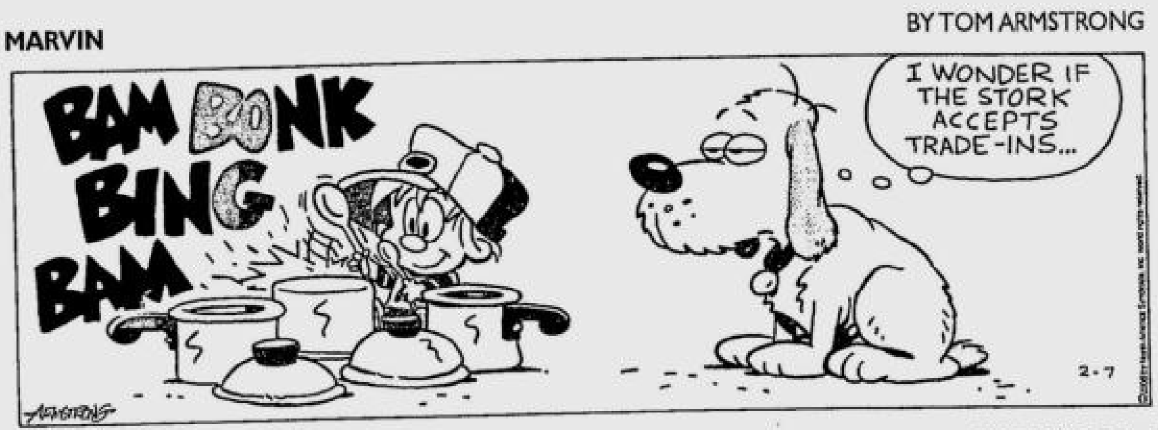
FOXTROT

BY BILL AMEND


THIS IS VOLLEYBALL, NOT DODGEBALL, JASON.
THEN WHY DO THEY KEEP AIMING AT ME?
GAME POINT...
AMEND 2-7

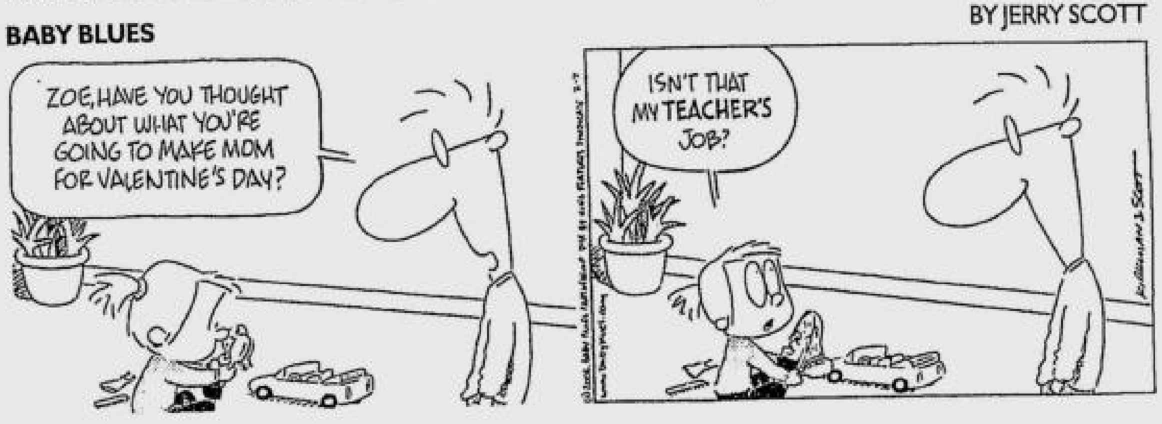
MARVIN

BY TOM ARMSTRONG


BAM BONK BING BAM
I WONDER IF THE STORK ACCEPTS TRADE-INS...
2-7
ARMSTRONG

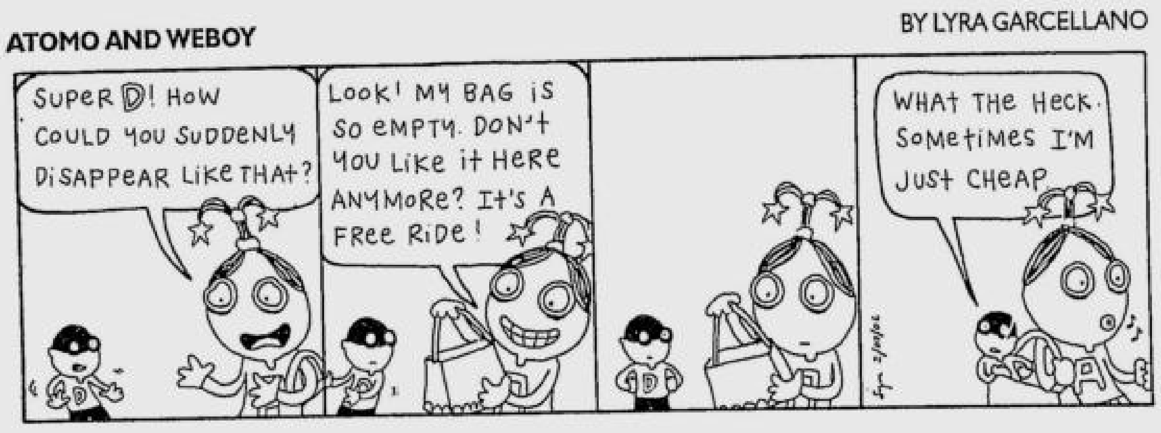
BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT


ZOE, HAVE YOU THOUGHT ABOUT WHAT YOU'RE GOING TO MAKE MOM FOR VALENTINE'S DAY?
ISN'T THAT MY TEACHER'S JOB?
KIRKMAN & SCOTT

ATOMO AND WEBOY

BY LYRA GARCELLANO


SUPER D! HOW COULD YOU SUDDENLY DISAPPEAR LIKE THAT?
LOOK! MY BAG IS SO EMPTY. DON'T YOU LIKE IT HERE ANYMORE? IT'S A FREE RIDE!
WHAT THE HECK. SOMETIMES I'M JUST CHEAP.

HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCIS DRAKE

YOU BORN TODAY: You're idealistic. You're also a humanitarian. You want to make the world a better place. You often have a vision for a better society. You value family and friends. You take your responsibilities seriously. Nevertheless, you're spontaneous and down-to-earth. The year ahead might be one of the most fortunate years of your life! **Birthdate of:** Chris Rock, comic/actor; Garth Brooks, singer; Ashton Kutcher, actor.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): This is a busy day. It's a good time to talk to siblings, relatives and neighbors. It's also a good day for negotiations and contracts. What's the buzz?

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): Stay on top of your financial scene today. Make friends with your bank account. Keep track of your cash flow. Now is the time to pay some bills and reduce your debt.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): Today's Moon is in your sign. Because of its relationship to Neptune and the Sun, you feel happy and unusually idealistic. It will give you great satisfaction to help others today.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): You need some peace and quiet today. You need to be by yourself. Work alone if you can, or at least stay busy behind the scenes. Get a little rest and relaxation.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): Conversations with friends, especially a female friend, will be significant today. You'll enjoy schmoozing with others. All group activities are favored.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): The Moon is at the top of your chart today. This means others will notice you, no matter how briefly. Conversations with bosses, VIPs and parents are important.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): It's important to do something different today. Vary your routine. Break it up a little. Go someplace you've never been to before. You want adventure, and you want to learn something new!

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): You feel very intense about practically everything today. Furthermore, you feel secretive. You're playing your cards close to your chest. This is a good day to define boundaries about shared property.

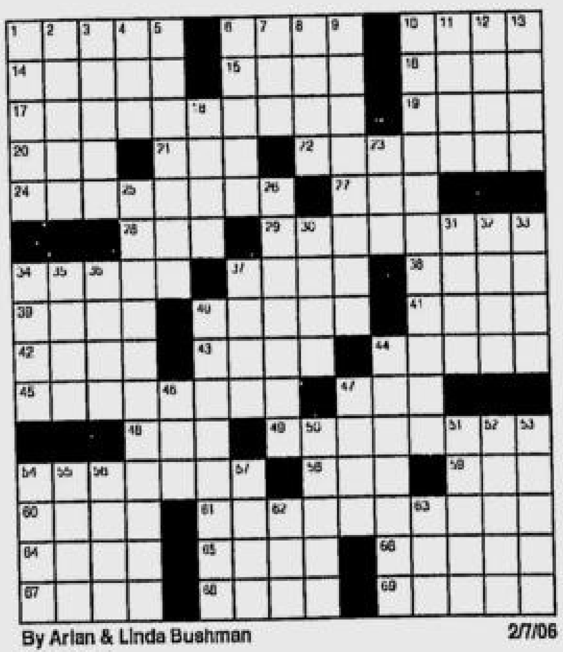
SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): Today the Moon is opposite your sign. This totally focuses you on others. You're energized, yet not sure what to say to someone.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): This is a good day to get better organized at home and at work. You're making lists. You want everything to be tidy, neat and at your fingertips when you need it.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): This can be a fun-filled, flirtatious day for you. Enjoy the company of others. Professional sports, vacations and show business are favored.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): This is a good day to putter around at home. Talk to parents; tidy up the place; invite family over. This is the time to talk about the bad old days.

DAILY CROSSWORD



By Arlan & Linda Bushman
Chicago, IL

2/7/06

ACROSS
1 Magic Kingdom neighbor
6 Things with scales
10 TV's Dr. __
14 Line of work
15 Brainstorm
16 First-class
17 Younger sibling's fashion
19 Theater box
20 Wedding declaration
21 Pops
22 Run about
24 Festive fallout
27 Rocky pinnacle
28 Apr. collector
29 Like a stored rope, often
34 Merits
37 Apollo's mother
38 Mystique
39 Stopper
40 Spring harbinger
41 Hounds
42 Got it!
43 Long periods
44 Betters oneself
45 Passageway
47 Dramatist Jonson
48 Greek letter
49 Reluctant
54 Accessory for stretching exercises
58 PC key
59 Ref. set member
60 Wrinkly citrus fruit
61 Travel option
64 Gung-ho
65 Holliday partner
66 Post-crucifixion depiction
67 On its way
68 Moral wrongs
69 Type of salts

DOWN
1 Guiding philosophy
2 Madrid museum
3 Body of rules
4 Curious
5 Hardens, as metal
6 Center
7 Flap
8 Church seats
9 Authoritative permission
10 Fortuneteller's specialty
11 Dunker's target
12 "Bus Stop" playwright
13 Lecher's look
18 Gets some grub
23 "You've got mail" co.
25 Kindergartner's medium
26 Maritime hazard
30 Redding of soul
31 Pairs
32 Prevail upon
33 Zoom by
34 Long poem
35 To boot
36 One who's sorry now
37 Brand marker
40 Branches out
44 Official entanglements
46 Belief system
47 Socket insert
50 Sloping walkways
51 Clinging vines
52 Acknowledge, in a way
53 Sparkle
54 Hearty laughs
55 Pointed arch
56 Secluded valley
57 Siamese, now
62 Big pot
63 Criticize

Monday's Puzzle Solved

P	A	C	K	■	S	C	A	P	A	■	C	A	F	E
A	C	H	E	■	T	A	L	O	N	■	O	M	I	T
P	T	A	M	E	E	T	I	N	G	■	A	F	R	O
P	E	O	P	L	E	■	S	T	U	N	T	M	E	N
Y	D	S	■	S	L	O	T	■	L	E	E	R	■	■
■	■	■	D	E	E	M	■	R	A	W	D	A	T	A
A	T	T	Y	■	R	E	V	E	R	E	■	D	O	N
L	O	V	E	S	■	L	I	P	■	R	A	I	T	T
E	T	A	■	T	E	E	M	E	D	■	D	O	F	S
C	O	N	T	E	X	T	■	A	R	I	Z	■	■	■
■	■	C	H	I	C	■	A	L	I	S	■	S	A	T
A	T	H	E	N	I	A	N	■	V	I	S	I	T	S
D	I	O	R	■	T	B	O	N	E	S	T	E	A	K
I	N	R	E	■	E	L	L	E	R	■	O	G	L	E
T	E	S	S	■	D	E	E	D	S	■	W	E	L	D

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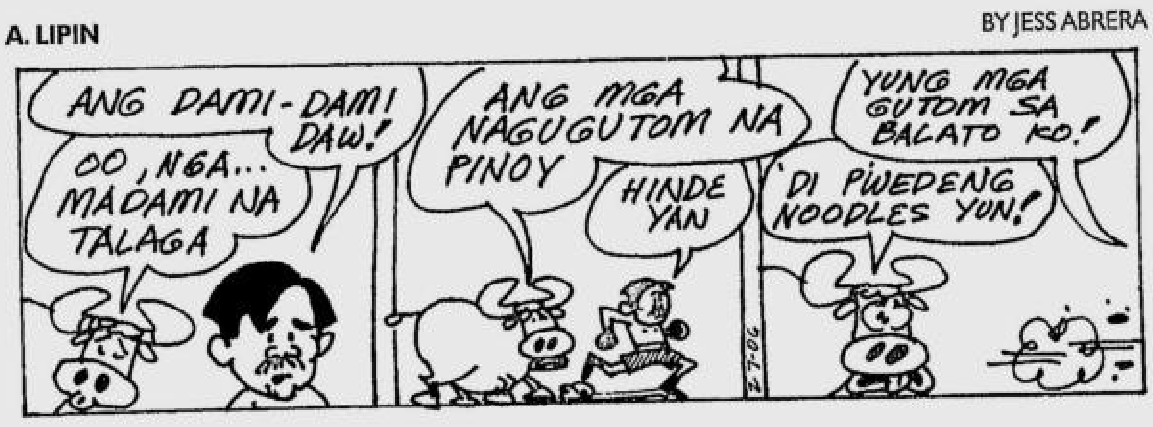
2/7/06

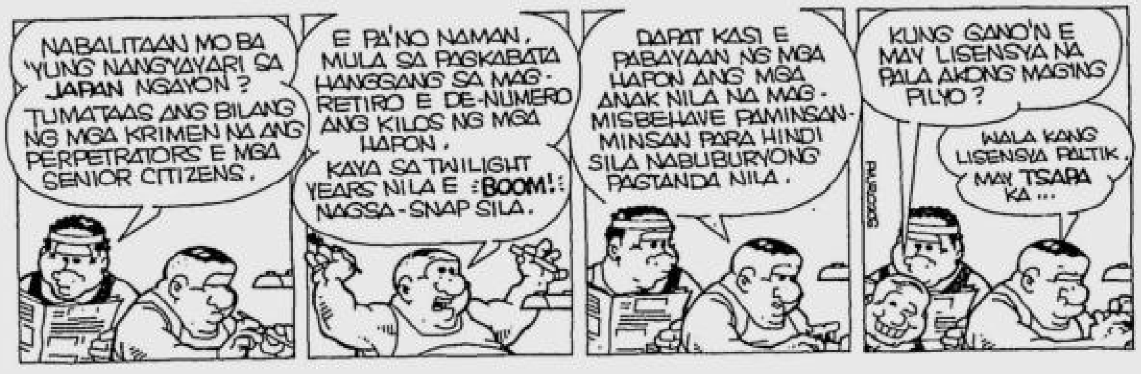
A. LIPIN

BY JESS ABRERA


ANG DAMI-DAMI DAW!
OO, NGA... MADAMI NA TALAGA
ANG MGA NAGUGUTOM NA PINOY
HINDE YAN
YUNG MGA GUTOM SA BALATO KO!
'DI PWEDENG NOODLES YUN!
2-7-06

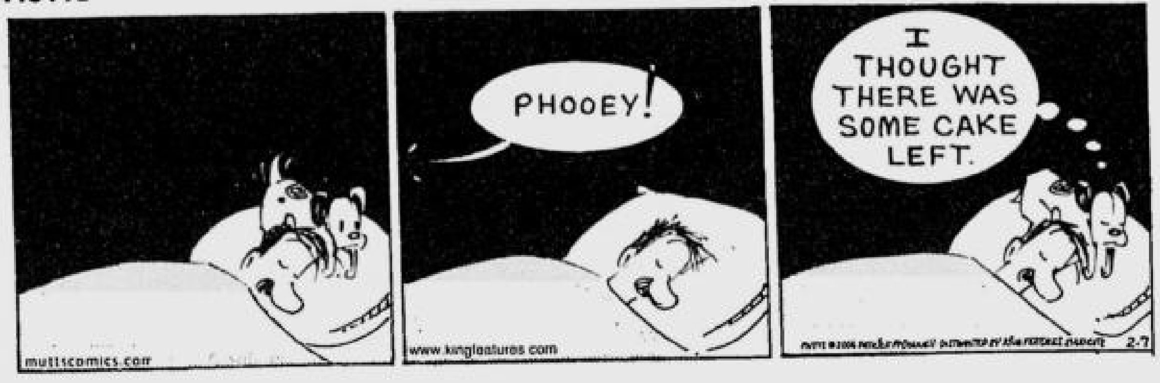
PUGAD BABOY

BY P.M. JUNIOR


NABALITAAN MO BA 'YUNG NANGYAYARI SA JAPAN NGAYON? TUMATAAS ANG BILANG NG MGA KRIMEN NA ANG PERPETRATORS E MGA SENIOR CITIZENS.
E PA'NO NAMAN, MULA SA PAGKABATA HANGGANG SA MAG-RETIRO E DE-NUMERO ANG KILOS NG MGA HAPON.
KAYA SA TWILIGHT YEARS NILA E BOOM! NAGSA-SNAP SILA.
DAPAT KASI E PABAYAAN NG MGA HAPON ANG MGA ANAK NILA NA MAG-MISBEHAVE PAMINSAN-MINSAN PARA HINDI SILA NABUBURYONG PAGTANDA NILA.
KUNG GANO'N E MAY LISENSYA NA PALA AKONG MAGING PILYO?
WALA KANG LISENSYA PALTIK. MAY TSAPA KA...
PUGAD

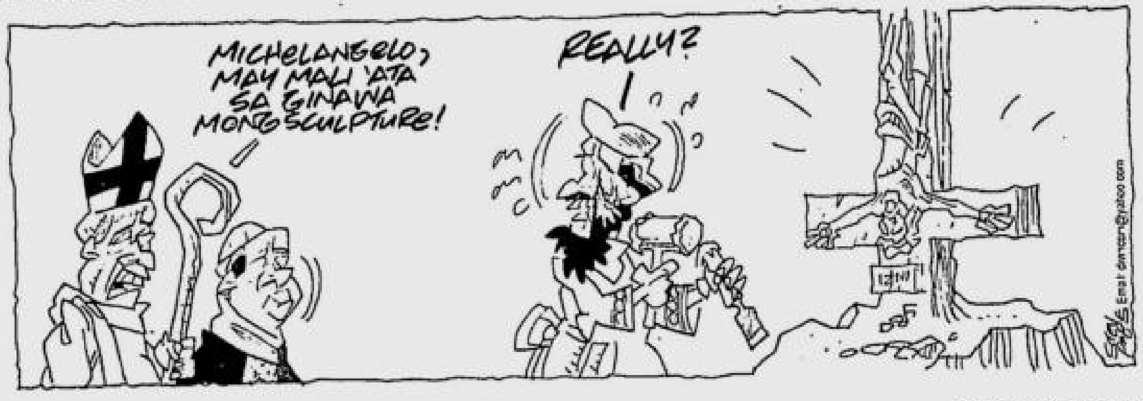
MUTTS

BY PATRICK McDONNELL


PHOOEY!
I THOUGHT THERE WAS SOME CAKE LEFT.
muttscomics.com
www.kingfeatures.com
2-7

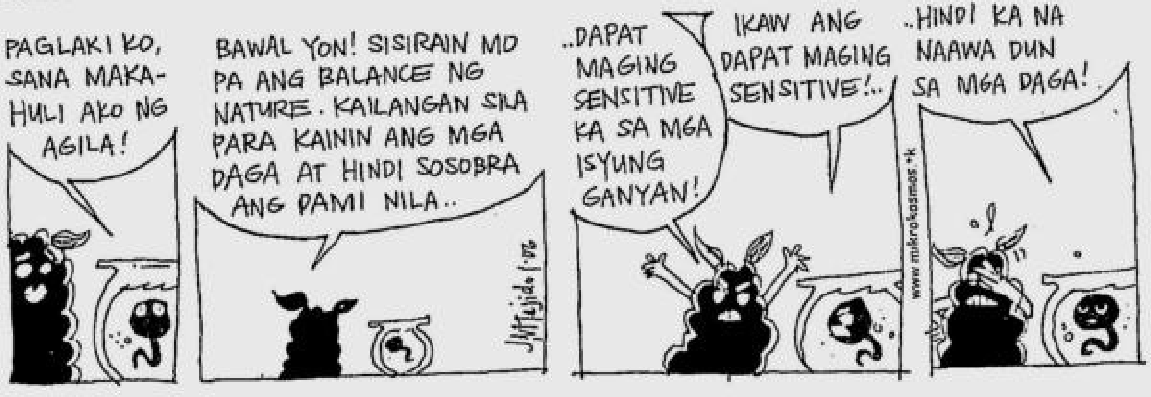
DIVINE COMEDY

BY STEVEN PABALINAS


MICHELANGELO, MAY MALI 'ATA SA GINAWA MONG SCULPTURE!
REALLY?

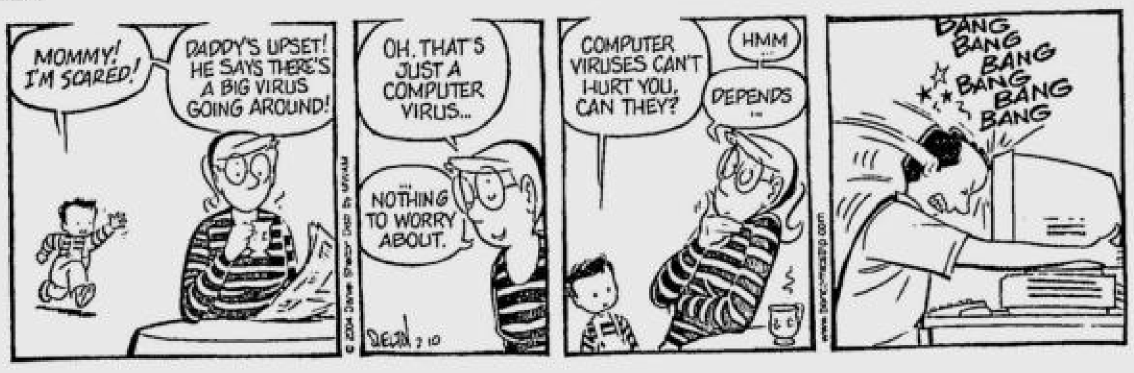
MIKROKOSMOS

BY JOMIKE TEJIDO


PAGLAKI KO, SANA MAKAHULI AKO NG AGILA!
BAWAL YON! SISIRAIN MO PA ANG BALANCE NG NATURE. KAILANGAN SILA PARA KAININ ANG MGA DAGA AT HINDI SOSOBRA ANG DAMI NILA..
..DAPAT MAGING SENSITIVE KA SA MGA ISYUNG GANYAN!
IKAW ANG DAPAT MAGING SENSITIVE!..
..HINDI KA NA NAAWA DUN SA MGA DAGA!
JMTejido 1-06
www.mikrokosmos.tk

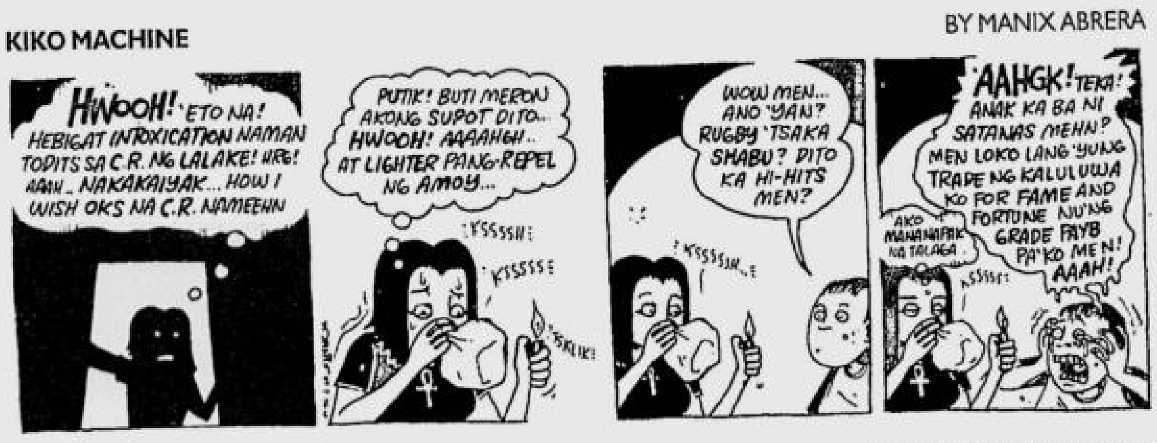
BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON


MOMMY! I'M SCARED!
DADDY'S UPSET! HE SAYS THERE'S A BIG VIRUS GOING AROUND!
OH, THAT'S JUST A COMPUTER VIRUS...
NOTHING TO WORRY ABOUT.
COMPUTER VIRUSES CAN'T HURT YOU, CAN THEY?
HMM
DEPENDS
BANG BANG BANG BANG BANG BANG
SHELTON 2-10

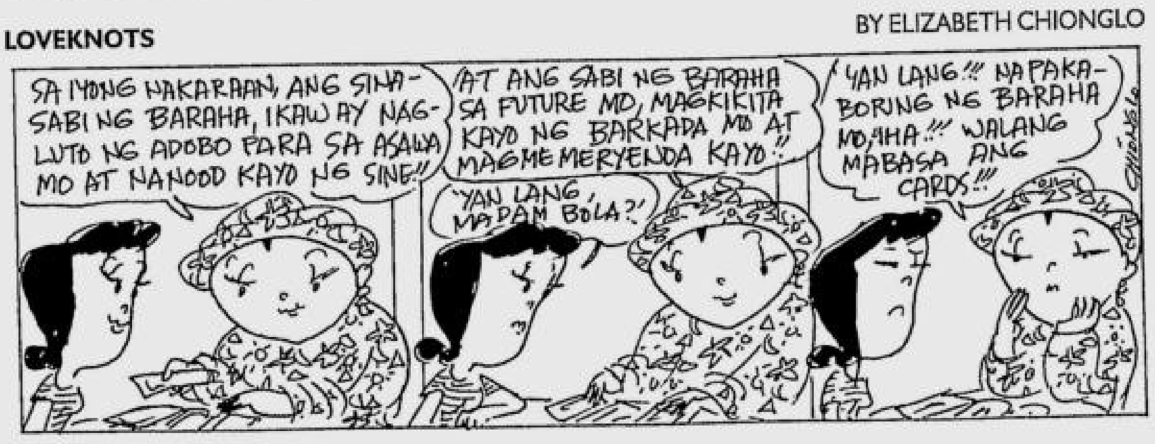
KIKO MACHINE

BY MANIX ABRERA


HWOOH! ETO NA! HEBIGAT INTOXICATION NAMAN TODITS SA C.R. NG LALAKE! NRG! AAAH.. NAKAKAIYAK... HOW I WISH OKS NA C.R. NAMEEHN
PUTIK! BUTI MERON AKONG SUPOT DITO.. HWOOH! AAAAHGH.. AT LIGHTER PANG-REPEL NG AMOY...
KSSSSH!
KSSSSS
KSLIK!
KSSSSH...
WOW MEN... ANO 'YAN? RUGBY 'TSAKA SHABU? DITO KA HI-HITS MEN?
AAHGK! TEKA! ANAK KA BA NI SATANAS MEHN? MEN LOKO LANG 'YUNG TRADE NG KALULUWA KO FOR FAME AND FORTUNE NU'NG GRADE FAYB PA'KO MEN! AAAH!
AKO MANANAPAK NA TALAGA
KSSSS

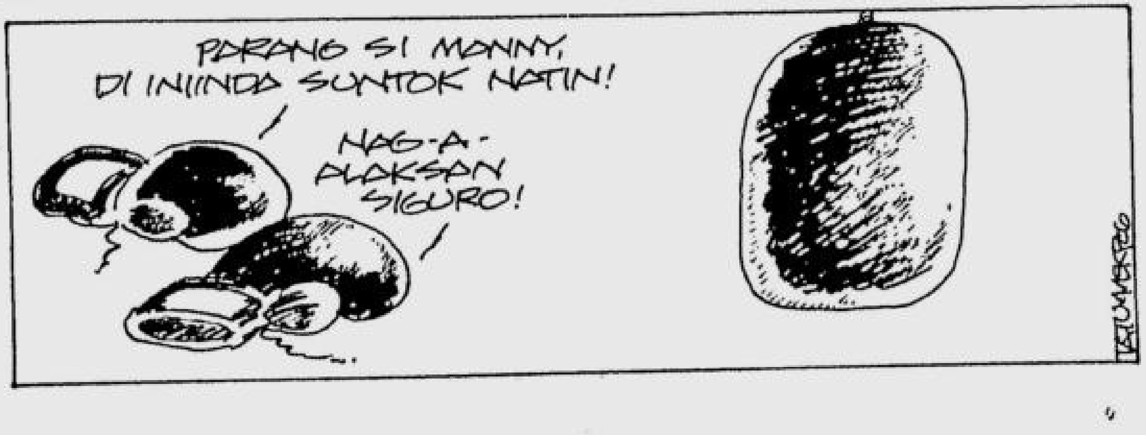
LOVEKNOTS

BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


SA IYONG NAKARAAN, ANG SINASABI NG BARAHA, IKAW AY NAGLUTO NG ADOBO PARA SA ASAWA MO AT NANOOD KAYO NG SINE!!
AT ANG SABI NG BARAHA SA FUTURE MO, MAGKIKITA KAYO NG BARKADA MO AT MAGMEMERYENDA KAYO!!
'YAN LANG, MADAM BOLA?!
'YAN LANG!!! NAPAKA-BORING NG BARAHA MO, AHA!!! WALANG MABASA ANG CARDS!!!
CHIONGLO

TULDOK

BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING


PARANG SI MONNY, DI INIINDA SUNTOK NATIN!
NAG-A-ALAKSAN SIGURO!
TATUM MORENO

E-mail: pr_e t@inquirer.com.ph

ENTERTAINMENT

ALL SMILES. "Sugo" cast members say they have so much to be thankful for—good ratings, for one. *(More photos on page A2-2)*

LEAD star Richard Gutierrez announces that he's looking forward to working with the cast on other GMA 7 projects.

Goodbye for now

By Marinel R. Cruz
Photos by Jim Guiao Punzalan

ON AVERAGE, THE show has a rating of 30 to 32 percent. It beat the competition in both its initial and current time slots."

GMA 7 senior vice president for entertainment Wilma Galvante announced this about "Sugo" during the thanksgiving party for the action-adventure series last week.

"Sugo," starring Richard Gutierrez and Isabel Oli and co-directed by Dominic Zapata and Lore Reyes, airs its final episode on Friday.

"For that rating, the network is grateful. It's also interesting to note that the show is loaded with commercials, even in the supposedly low season, that time of the year when viewing levels drop," Galvante explained.

The "Sugo" party began at 7 p.m. with a thanksgiving Mass at the Plaza Ibarra on Timog Ave. in Quezon City. The cast members had dinner with network officials, the show's technical team, and members of the entertainment press.

"To the friends I made on this show, I bid you no goodbye. I'm looking forward to working with you again in other GMA 7 projects," Richard said.

Network sources confirmed that Richard will play the lead role in the upcoming TV version of "Captain Barbell," the Pinoy super hero created by the late writer-publisher Mars Ravelo.

"Sugo" will be replaced by the Koreanovela "Kim Sam Soon," said a GMA 7 insider. Another *fantaserye*, "Mahika"—which will star Angel Locsin and Dennis Trillo—is also being readied for airing soon.

GARDO Versoza receives blessing from priest

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1 SAW 2 2:15, 4:25, 6:35, 8:55, 11:00 R-13
2 WALK THE LINE 11:55, 2:45, 5:35, 8:25, 11:00 PG-13
3 DERAILED 1:05, 3:35, 6:05, 8:35, 11:00 R-13
4 PROOF 12:40, 3:00, 5:20, 7:40, 10:00 PG-13

POWER PLANT CINEMA
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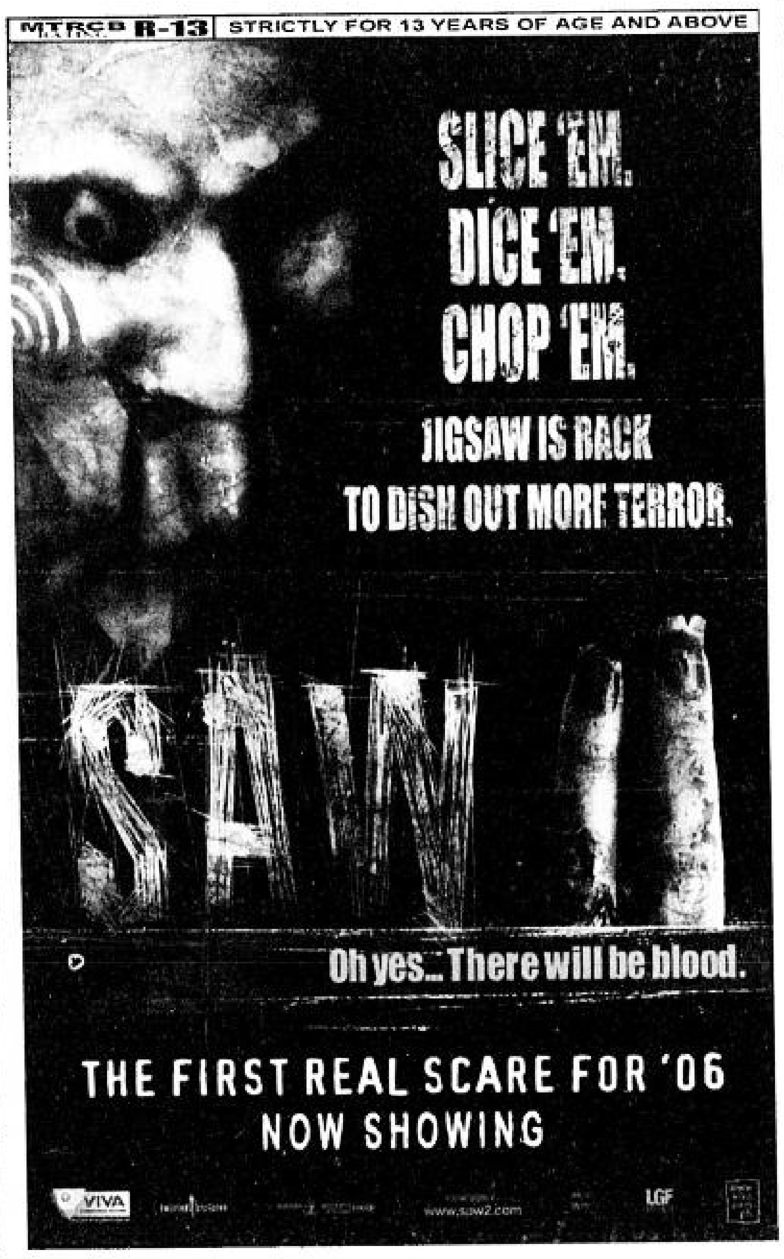
ZATHURA GP 12:30,2:45,5:00, 7:15,9:30
CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN 2 GP 1:10,3:20,5:30,7:40,9:50
WALK THE LINE PG13 2:20,5:00,7:40,10:20
PROOF PG13 1:00,3:15,5:30,7:45,10:00
BLOODRAYNE R13 1:35,3:45,5:55, 8:05,10:15
DERAILED R13 1:10,3:30,5:50, 8:10,10:30

MOVIES AND SCREENING SCHEDULES SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE: FOR VERIFICATION CALL 898-144041



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DICE 'EM.
CHOP 'EM.
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Oh yes... There will be blood.
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BAMBOO LIVE IN CONCERT AT METROPOLIS ALABANG ON FEB 14, 7PM
KITCHIE NADAL VALENTINE CONCERT AT STARMALL EDSA ON FEB 14, 7PM
BASIL VALDEZ & AGOT ISIDRO VALENTINE SHOW AT STARMALL LAS PINAS ON FEB 14, 7PM

2ND WEEK
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"CYBER VIXEN OF THE YEAR"
TOMB RAIDER.
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BLOODRAYNE

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FIREWALL
EVERYTHING HE LOVES IS ABOUT TO BE USED AGAINST HIM.
THEY'RE ALREADY INSIDE.

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ANGEL LOCSIN
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DUNKIN' DONUTS
SMIRNOFF
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Feb. 8 6:30pm SM Fairview Feb 10 4pm Glorietta Feb 11 4:30pm SM North Edsa
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Dividing the MMFF pie

SHANG CINEPLEX

① ZATHURA MTRCB. GP
3 30, 7.50
CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN 2 MTRCB:GP
1.20, 5 40, 10 00

② DERAILED
MTRCB R-13
12 00, 2 30, 5 00, 7 30, 10 00

③ WALK THE LINE
MTRCB. PG-13
1.30, 4.20, 7:10, 10:00

④ SAW 2
MTRCB R-13
1.20, 3.30, 5.40, 7:50, 10:00

PREMIERE THEATRE PROOF
MTRCB PG-13 1 50, 4 10, 6 30, 9 00
Movies and schedules are subject to change without prior notice

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633-4735 for more details

Shangri-La Plaza

By Bayani San Diego Jr.

THE FILM ACADEMY OF THE PHILIPPINES IS up in arms over the reallocation of the funds of the Metro Manila Film Festival, FAP director-general Leo G. Martinez told INQUIRER Entertainment.

In the previous MMFF Sharing Scheme, said Martinez, the proceeds were divided among the FAP, the Movie Workers Welfare Foundation (Mowelfund) and the Motion Picture Anti-Film Piracy Council, 30 percent each; and the Presidential Social Fund (PSF), 10 percent.

"From 30 percent, FAP's share has been cut to 10 percent," said Martinez. "Likewise with the Anti-Piracy Council's. Mowelfund's was retained at 30 percent and the PSF at 10 percent. There are two new beneficiaries—the Optical Media Board (OMB) and the Film Development Council of the Philippines (FDCP) at 20 percent each."

This latest revision, said Martinez, was contained in a memorandum dated Jan. 24 and

MMFF/ A2-4

FESTIVAL PROCEEDS

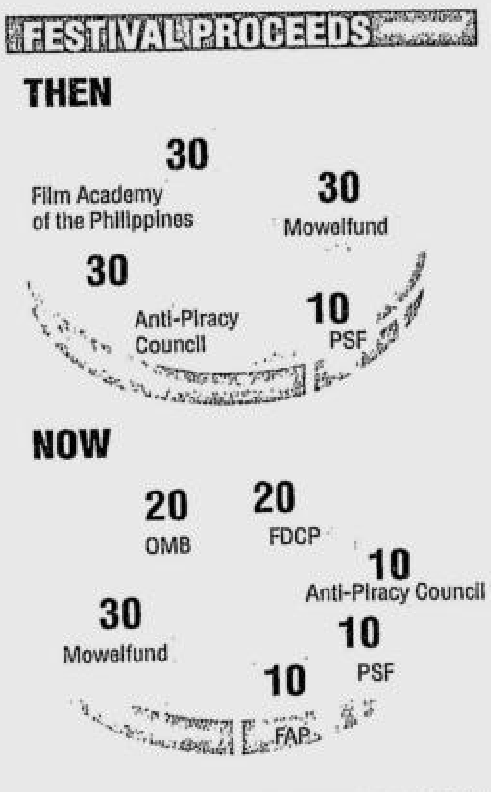

ILLUSTRATION BY ALBERT RODRIGUEZ

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2 (DOLBY) DERAILED R13
3 (DOLBY) WALK THE LINE PG13
4 (DOLBY) SAW2 R13
PREMIERE
(DOLBY) PROOF PG13

Filinvest FESTIVAL CINEMA
(Muntinlupa) tel 850.3571 or 72
1 (DDS) SAW-2
2 (SDDS) ZATHURA
3 (DTS) THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA
4 GOLD (DTS) WALK THE LINE
5 GOLD (DOLBY) BLOODRAYNE
6 GOLD (SDDS) DERAILED
7 GOLD (DOLBY) WHO'S YOUR DADDY
8 DON'T GIVE UP ON US
9 CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN-2
10 UNDERWORLD-2

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1 (DOLBY) SAW 2
2 (DOLBY) WALK THE LINE
3 (DOLBY) DERAILED
4 (DOLBY) PROOF

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Movie Theatres of the New Millenium

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
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2 (DTS) ZATHURA
3 (DOLBY) DERAILED
4 THE MAID

Cinema 2000 Pavilion Mall
(Biñan) tel. (049) 4111146
1 THE MAID
2 (DOLBY) DERAILED
3 (DTS) ZATHURA
4 DON'T GIVE UP ON US

Cinema 2000 Cinemagix
(Urdaneta) tel(075) 568.6771
1 THE FOG
2 SHAKE RATTLE & ROLL
3 (DOLBY) LAGOT KA SA KUYA KO

Cinema 2000 Metrotown
(Tarlac) tel (045) 982.1729
1 DOMINO
2 DON'T GIVE UP ON US
3 (DOLBY) CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN-2
4 (DTS) THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Plaridel) tel (044) 795.3320
1 ZATHURA
2 DERAILED
3 FAMILY STONE / SHAKE RATTLE & ROLL

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Gapan)
1 ZATHURA
2 AKO LEGAL WIFE

CINEMA 2000
Cinema 2000 Waltermart Makati
Waltermart Center, Chino Roces Ave. cor. Antonio Arnaiz Pio del Pilar, Makati City
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1 ZATHURA
2 DERAILED
3 UNDERWORLD-2
4 PROOF

Blue Wave MARIKINA
Sumulong Highway cor. Mayor Gil Fernando Street, Sto. Niño, Marikina City tel. 9341927
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2 (DOLBY) ZATHURA
3 (DOLBY) BLOODRAYNE
4 (DOLBY) RESERVED

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Isetann Cinerama Complex Recto
tel 7334228
1 (DOLBY) UNDERWORLD-2
2 DERAILED
3 DON'T GIVE UP ON US
4 SAW-2
5 BLOODRAYNE

starmall EDSA SHAW
(Mandaluyong) tel. 7266150
3 SAW-2
4 (DOLBY DIGITAL EX) BLOODRAYNE
5 DERAILED

MARKETPLACE
Mandaluyong
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1 THE MAN
2 THE MAID
3 LAGOT KA SA KUYA KO
4 RESERVED

Masagana CINEMA
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1 UNANG TIKIM
2 DERAILED
3 BLOODRAYNE

metropolis star cinema
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(ALABANG) tel. 8504285, 6433994
1 SAW-2
2 DERAILED
3 BLOODRAYNE
4 UNDERWORLD-2

Center Mall Cinema
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1 ZATHURA
2 DERAILED

Jade Cinema
(Angeles City) tel (045) 887.5001 to 03
1 (DOLBY EX) DERAILED
2 KUTOB
3 (DTS EX) RUMOR HAS IT
4 ZATHURA

THEATRES
NE Pacific Mall Cabanatuan, telephone No. (044) 600-3026
1 THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA
2 ZATHURA
3 JARHEAD

Cine Nepo
(Angeles City) tel (045) 887.0121
1 DERAILED
2 KUTOB
3 (DOLBY) RESERVED
4 (DTS) RESERVED

PACIFIC MALL LUCENA CINEMAGIC
Pacific Mall Lucena Tel (042) 660-5271
1 ZATHURA
2 ST. ANGIE
3 RESERVED
4 RESERVED

Cine Nepo
(Dagupan City) tel (075) 515.8489
1 FAMILY STONE
2 THE FOG
3 (DOLBY) JUST LIKE HEAVEN
4 (DTS) DON'T GIVE UP ON US

Centre Plaza Cinema
(Balanga, Bataan) tel (047) 237.7007
1 THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA
2 EXORCISM OF EMILY ROSE

Lianas Cinema
(Pasig) tel 640.4748
1 THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA
2 HIGH RISK

Lianas Cinema
(Alabang) tel 850.1276
1 (SDDS) MILLION DOLLAR BABY
2 VENUS
3 BIKTIMA
4 (DTS) HAUNTED SPIRIT

Lianas MovieCity
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7202
1 (DOLBY) DERAILED
2 DON'T GIVE UP ON US
3 (DTS) ZATHURA
4 NIGHT JOB
5 THE MAID

Fiesta World Mall
(Lipa) tel (043) 981.0790
1 FOUR BROTHERS
2 ZATHURA
3 RUMOR HAS IT
4 DERAILED

Berma Cinema
(Baclaran) tel 879.2030 / 879.2029
1 THE MAN
2 UNANG TIKIM

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CINEMA 2 PROOF 11:20, 1:35, 3:50, 6:05, 8:20, 10:35 GP
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PROMENADE
GREENHILLS
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NOW SHOWING
CINEMA 3 CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN 11:10, 1:20, 3:30, 5:40, 7:50, 10:10 GP
CINEMA 4 WALK THE LINE 11:35, 2:20, 5:05, 7:50, 10:35 PG13
CINEMA 5 DERAILED 10:50, 1:05, 3:20, 5:35, 7:50, 10:10 R13

TICKET PRICES & SCREENING TIME SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE. FOR CINEMA INQUIRIES, CALL: 722 4496.

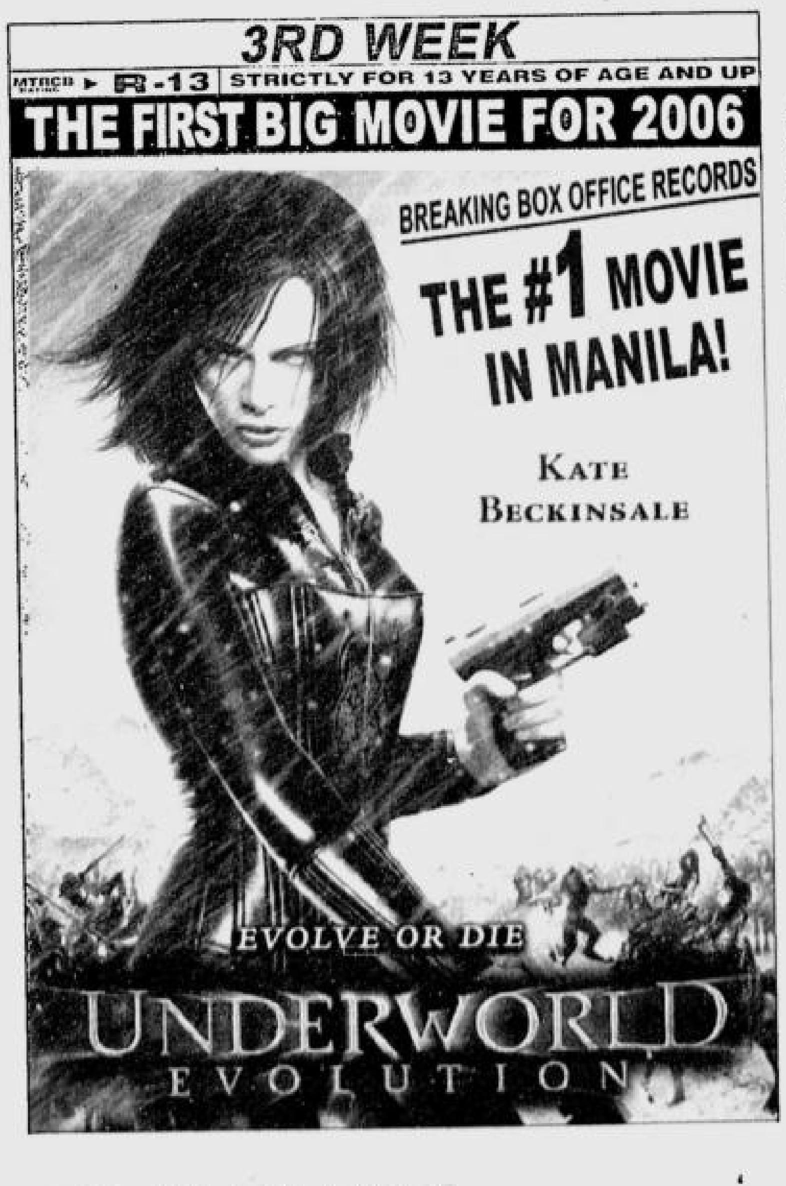
MUSIC MUSEUM

FEBRUARY 3 & 4	NINA & NYOY	9PM
FEBRUARY 10,11 &13	VINA M., RACHEL A. & GENEVA C.	8:30PM

TEATRINO
PROMENADE GREENHILLS

FEBRUARY 10,2006	BOBBY SOUL	9PM
FEBRUARY 11,2006	SIDE A	9PM
FEBRUARY 13 & 14	JAZZ YOU, JAZZ ME ISABELLA & RICHARD MERCK	9PM

FOR INQUIRIES & RESERVATION, PLS. CALL : 721-6726 OR 721-0635



Lessons to be

DOLL

Dolly A
Carvaj

AFTER THE NATIONWIDE JUBILATION over Manny Pacquiao's victory comes immense gloom brought about by the "Wowowee" tragedy. What a way to mark the game show's first anniversary! National euphoria turned into grief.

I have a soft spot for Willie Revillame's show because it paved the way for my son IC's show biz comeback. It was in "Wowowee" that IC first appeared after a long absence from the scene. How could a show that gives hope to the hopeless turn out this way? Nobody is to be blamed, but there are lessons to be learned from the tragic event.

- For entertainers like Willie and company, their job is to give the audience a good show. In the absence of heroes, the "masa" tend to create one. So they cling to their boob tube favorites and everything their idol stands for. "Wowowee" fanatics held on to the promise of a better life. It's ironic that it's this very hope that caused them their life. Perhaps TV shows should stop too much drumbeating so as to avoid mass hysteria. Keep it simple. Keep it real. Don't let the ratings game drive you to extremes.
- For viewers, although there's nothing wrong with pinning your hopes on a game show you must also remember the value of hard-earned money. Instead of lining up for days just to get inside the studio, why not try queueing up for a job interview?

A game show must be fun fun fun. When it centers on fund, fund, fund, desperation comes in. Don't be idle and succumb to TV idolatry.

- The "WAWAwee" catastrophe is a sad, sad indication of how tough life is for most Pinoys. Times are so bad that we grab on to the slightest chance of becoming instant millionaires. To think the "Wowowee" Tragedy happened on the same day that Pinoy Big Brother Celebrity Edition was supposed to be launched (the launch was postponed). Both shows have millions at stake. But while the *masa* have to endure fatigue and hunger for a crack at the jackpot, all the housemates have to do is to follow Big Brother's rules. Are TV shows sending the wrong signals for the right reasons, or the right signals for the wrong reasons?

Lovers' quarrel?

ROXANNE Guinoo and Joross Gamboa were spotted strolling in Greenbelt 3.

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Heartso

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776-9359

Icon 6

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hoo.com)

SCENES from the thanksgiving party. From top, GMA 7 SVP for entertainment Wilma Galvante congratulates the cast, actors Versoza (Apo Abukay) and Amy Austria (Graciela), directors Dominic Zapata and Lore Reyes and LJ Reyes(Dorina).

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learned when euphoria turns into grief

YWOOD

nn
al

obviously having a lover's oxanne was blabbering, but s quiet. He probably didn't ate a scene. She seemed real- and eventually walked away n behind, much to the bewil- f the curious onlookers. Were lost in the Valentine shuffle or ith the lost hearts?

ngs

and 11, the R & B Prince and Jay-R and Kyla—bring their swoon music onstage via the Valentine concert "Heart- GMA Network concert pro- t the Aliw Theater. Joining Jennylyn Mercado, Yasmien nier Castillo, Jonalyn Viray n Espartinez. Aside from the isic, they will present touch- onials of celebrity and non- ouples on their unforgettable e love stories. Tickets avail- l SM-Ticketnet outlets. Call

n Season'

e three divas of the '80s— o, Ivy Violan and Dulce—to- the first time on the concert h newcomers George Tagle el Castro in One Production Hearts in Season," Feb 13, ninsula Rigodon Ballroom, Fuentes as musical director. and Janet are out to reclaim es in the concert scene. Their alents are legendary.

is a theater actor who got ws as the lead in "St. Louis n Filipinos...the Musical." painter/classical singer. Call or (0917) 901-1333

py of the avant-garde mag, esh), with Andrew Wolf on Thanks to the staff, especially e editor Angelo Morales and Raymund Isaac for their won- ure on my *hija*, IC Mendoza

wateringholeshangrila@ya-

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SAW 2 1:00 / 3:10 / 5:20 / 7:30 / 9:40	BLOODRAYNE 1:00 / 3:10 / 5:20 / 7:30 / 9:40	UNDERWORLD 2 12:30 / 2:50 / 5:10 / 7:30 / 9:50	DERAILED 1:30 / 4:00 WALK THE LINE 6:15 / 9:00
ZATHURA 1:10 / 3:20 / 5:30 / 7:40 / 9:50	LITTLE MANHATTAN 12:50 / 3:00 / 5:10 / 7:20 / 9:30	CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN 2 1:30 / 4:10 / 6:50 / 9:30	ONLY P120 ADMISSION GLOBE PLATINUM P249/P299

ALIMALL CINEMAS

SAW 2 11:55 / 2:05 / 4:15 / 6:25 / 8:35	DERAILED 12:35 / 3:05 / 5:35 / 8:05	UNDERWORLD 2 1:40 / 4:00 / 6:20 / 8:40
DON'T GIVE UP ON US 12:45 / 3:15 / 5:45 / 8:15	BLOODRAYNE 1:45 / 3:55 / 6:05 / 8:15	DOLBY DIGITAL dts SDDS

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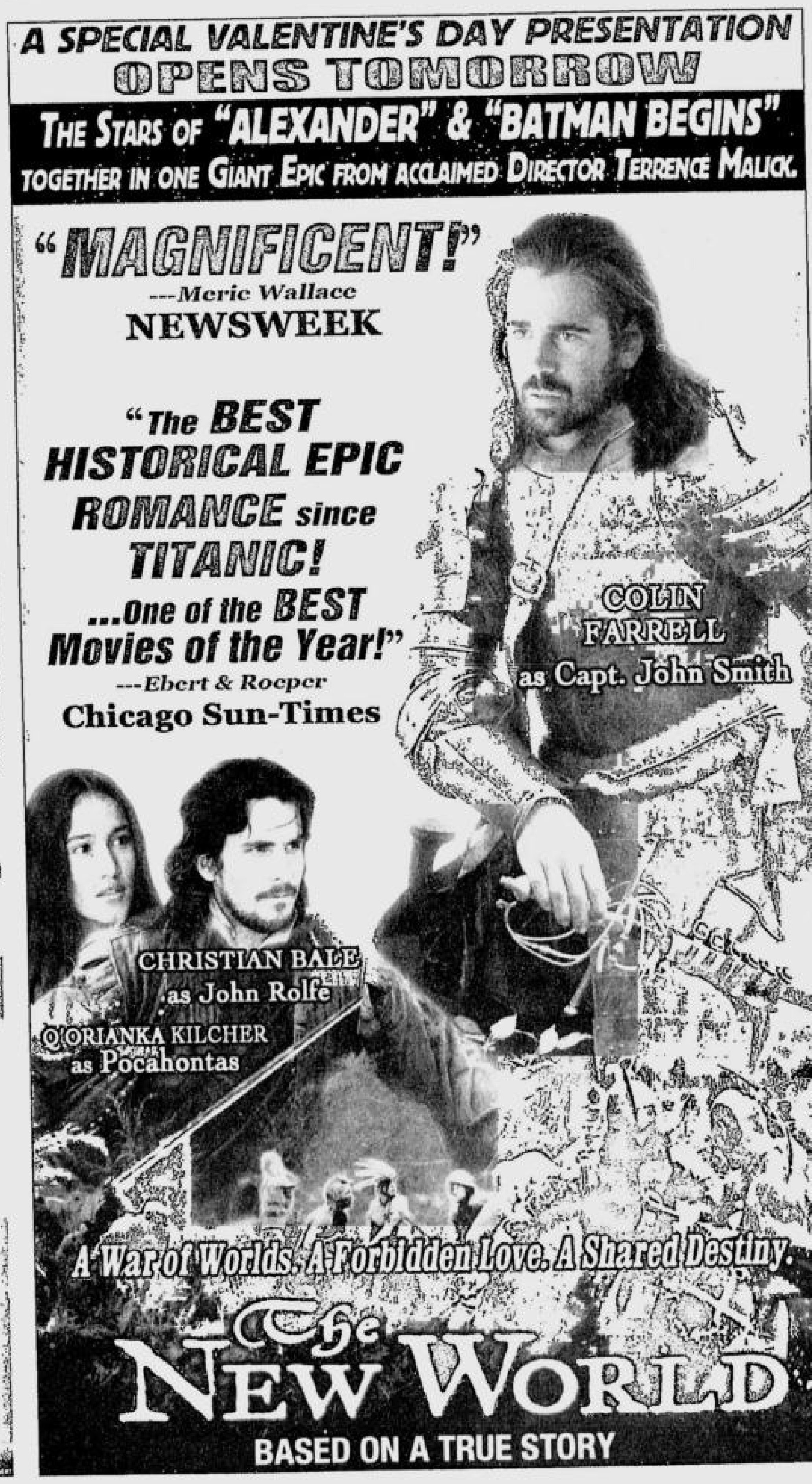

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GALLERIA
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1 ZATHURA • THX
12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 9:50

2 BLOODRAYNE
1:10 3:20 5:30 7:40 9:50

3 DERAILED
12:00 2:30 5:00 7:30 10:00

4 SAW 2
1:20 3:30 5:40 7:50 10:00

5 WALK THE LINE
11:40 2:15 4:50 7:25 10:00

6 UNDERWORLD 2
12:10 2:35 5.00 7:25 9:50

7 RUMOR HAS IT
12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 9:50

8 CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN 2
12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 9:50

9 PROOF
12:40 3:00 5:20 7:40 10:00

10 DON'T GIVE UP ON US
12:10 2:35 5:00 7:25 9.50

ERMITA
536-7809 to 12

1 BLOODRAYNE
10:10 12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 10:00

2 ZATHURA 12:00 2:00 4:00
CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN 2 6:15 8:10 10:00

3 UNDERWORLD 2
12:00 2:00 4:00 6:00 8.00 10:00

4 WALK THE LINE
10:30 1:20 4:10 7:00 9.50

5 DERAILED
10:10 12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 10:00

6 PROOF
10:30 12:30 2:20 4:10 6:00 8:00 9:50

7 SAW 2
10:20 12:20 2:20 4:20 6:20 8:20 9:50

METRO EAST
682-8193 / 682-8199

1 CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN 2
1:00 3:00 5:00 7:00 9:00

2 DERAILED
11:05 1:35 4:05 6:35 9:05

3 ZATHURA
11.05 1:35 4:05 6:35 9:05

4 UNDERWORLD 2
12:00 2:15 4.30 6:45 9:00

5 BLOODRAYNE
11.50 2:10 4 30 6:50 9:10

6 DON'T GIVE UP ON US
12:00 2:15 4:30 6:45 9:00

7 SAW 2
12 50 2:50 4:50 6 50 9:00

8 PROOF
12:50 2:50 4:50 6:50 9:00

NOVALICHES
935-3231 / 935-3229-30

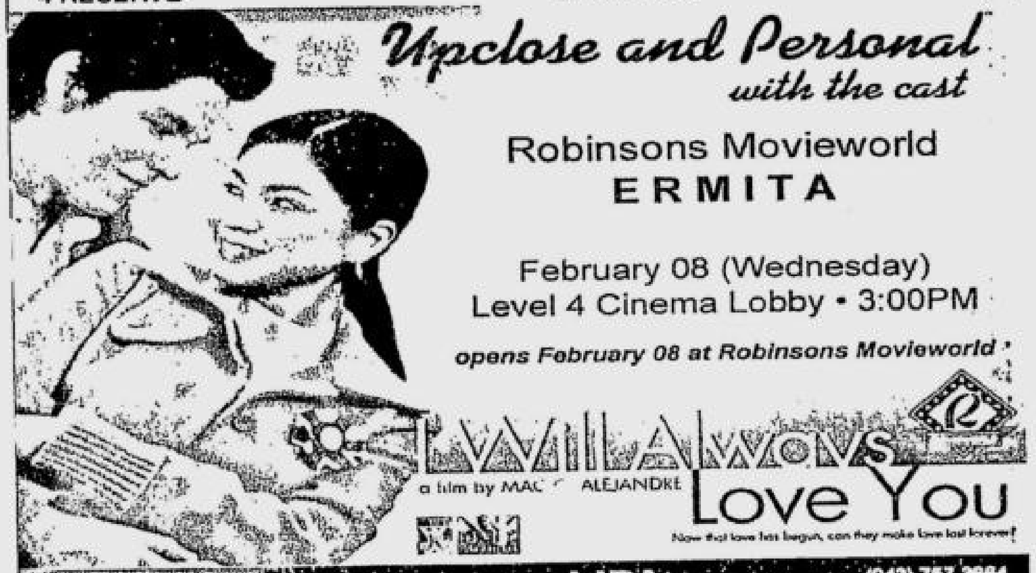
1 CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN 2
2 ZATHURA
3 HALF LIGHT
4 UNDERWORLD 2
5 SAW 2
6 DERAILED

CITISQUARE MALABON
288-2576

1 The Chronicles of NARNIA
2 JUTOB
3 RESERVE
4 RESERVE

PIONEER
687-5378

1 DERAILED
2 BLOODRAYNE
3 UNDERWORLD 2
4 ZATHURA



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2 THE MAID
3 LITTLE MANHATTAN
4 MOURNING GIRLS
5 ZATHURA

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(043) 312-5870

1 ZATHURA
2 MOURNING GIRLS
3 SAINT ANGE
4 RUMOR HAS IT
5 DERAILED

DASMARINAS
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(046) 416-4332

1 DERAILED
2 ZATHURA
3 LITTLE MANHATTAN
4 RUMOR HAS IT
5 THE MAID

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1 JARHEAD
2 KUTOB
3 RUMOR HAS IT
4 DERAILED

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1 HALF LIGHT
2 ZATHURA
3 DON'T GIVE UP ON US
4 DERAILED
5 CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN 2
6 SAW 2

STARMILLS
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1 HALF LIGHT
2 DON'T GIVE UP ON US
3 ZATHURA
4 RUMOR HAS IT
5 THE MAID
6 DERAILED

BACOLOD
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1 DERAILED
2 ZATHURA
3 JARHEAD
4 LITTLE MANHATTAN
5 MOURNING GIRLS
6 WHO'S YOUR DADDY?

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1 DERAILED
2 ZATHURA
3 JARHEAD
4 THE MAN
5 RUMOR HAS IT
6 SAINT ANGE

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WALK THE LINE
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08:20 LFS / 09:00 LMF / 11:15 END
DERAILED
12:00 FS / 01:15 MF /04:10 / 06:30
08:20 LFS / 09:00 LMF / 10:50 END
MEGAMALL
CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN 2
11:15 FS / 11:45 MF / 02:00
03:45 LFS / 04:15 LMF / 06:00 END

CEBU (032) 231-3876
NARNIA
11:20 FS / 11:30 MF / 02:00 / 04:30 / 07:00
09:20 LFS / 09:30 LMF / 11:50 END
UNDERWORLD EVOLUTION
11:20 FS / 11:30 MF / 01:30 / 03:30 / 05:30/ 07:30
09:15 LFS / 09:30 LMF / 11:15 END
DERAILED
11:20 FS / 11:30 MF / 01:30 / 03:30 / 05:30 / 07:30
09:20 LFS / 09:30 LMF / 11:20 END

movietime

METRO MANILA

SM MEGAMALL
1. CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN 2
2. WALK THE LINE
3. THE MAID
4. BIG TIME
5. ZATHURA
6. DERAILED
7. SAW 2
8. PROOF
9. BLOODRAYNE
10. UNDERWORLD 2
11. DON'T GIVE UP ON US
12. NARNIA

SM CITY STA. MESA
1. UNDERWORLD 2
2. ZATHURA
3. BLOODRAYNE
4. DERAILED
5. SAW 2
6. CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN 2
7. WALK THE LINE
8. NARNIA
9. PROOF
10. DON'T GIVE UP ON US

SM CITY BICUTAN
1. BLOODRAYNE
2. DERAILED
3. SAW 2
4. UNDERWORLD 2

SM SUPERCENTER VALENZUELA
1. DERAILED
2. UNDERWORLD 2
3. SAW 2
4. THE MAID

SM CITY FAIRVIEW
1. NARNIA
2. CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN 2
3. BIG TIME
4. SAW 2
5. DON'T GIVE UP ON US
6. BLOODRAYNE
7. UNDERWORLD 2
8. ZATHURA
9. BLUE MOON
10. DERAILED
11. KING KONG
12. THE MAID

SM CITY SOUTHMALL
1. UNDERWORLD 2
2. DON'T GIVE UP ON US
3. SAW 2
4. BLOODRAYNE
5. ZATHURA
6. PROOF
7. WALK THE LINE
8. DERAILED
9. BIG TIME
10. RESERVED

SM SUPERCENTER SUCAT
1. DERAILED
2. SAW 2
3. BLOODRAYNE
4. UNDERWORLD 2

SM CITY NORTH EDSA
1. ZATHURA
2. UNDERWORLD 2
3. DON'T GIVE UP ON US
4. SAW 2
5. DERAILED
6. PROOF
7. WALK THE LINE
8. BLOODRAYNE

SM CITY MANILA
1. NARNIA
2. DERAILED
3. SAW 2
4. UNDERWORLD 2
5. ZATHURA
6. BLOODRAYNE
7. PROOF
8. CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN 2
9. DON'T GIVE UP ON US
10. THE MAID
11. BIG TIME
12. WALK THE LINE

SM CITY SAN LAZARO
1. UNDERWORLD 2
2. DERAILED
3. BLOODRAYNE
4. SAW 2
5. PROOF
6. DON'T GIVE UP ON US

LUZON

SM CITY PAMPANGA
1. ZATHURA
2. DERAILED
3. NARNIA
4. THE MAID
5. RUMOR HAS IT
6. DON'T GIVE UP ON US

SM CITY BAGUIO
1. DERAILED
2. ZATHURA
3. DON'T GIVE UP ON US
4. RUMOR HAS IT

SM SUPERCENTER MOLINO
1. UNDERWORLD 2
2. ZATHURA
3. CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN 2
4. DERAILED

SM CITY BACOOR
1. NARNIA
2. ZATHURA
3. SAW 2
4. BLOODRAYNE
5. UNDERWORLD 2
6. DON'T GIVE UP ON US
7. DERAILED
8. HALF LIGHT

SM CITY MARILAO
1. DERAILED
2. THE MAID
3. ZATHURA
4. DON'T GIVE UP ON US

SM CITY DASMARINAS
1. DERAILED
2. ZATHURA
3. RUMOR HAS IT
4. THE MAID

SM CITY LUCENA
1. ZATHURA
2. ST. ANGE
3. LITTLE MANHATTAN
4. DON'T GIVE UP ON US

SM CITY BATANGAS
1. DON'T GIVE UP ON US
2. ZATHURA
3. DERAILED
4. RUMOR HAS IT

VISAYAS AND MINDANAO

SM CITY CEBU
1. NARNIA
2. UNDERWORLD 2
3. DERAILED
4. LITTLE MANHATTAN
5. HALF LIGHT
6. THE MAID
7. DON'T GIVE UP ON US
8. ZATHURA

SM CITY ILOILO
1. ST. ANGE
2. RESERVED
3. DON'T GIVE UP ON US
4. ZATHURA
5. RUMOR HAS IT
6. DERAILED
7. RESERVED
8. THE MAN

SM CITY DAVAO
1. DERAILED
2. ST. ANGE
3. ZATHURA
4. AN UNFINISHED LIFE
5. LITTLE MANHATTAN
6. DON'T GIVE UP ON US

SM CITY CAGAYAN DE ORO
1. DERAILED
2. FAMILY STONE
3. WHO'S YOUR DADDY
4. ZATHURA

SCHEDULES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON MOVIE LISTING, MTRCB RATING, SCREENING SCHEDULES AND THE LATEST HAPPENINGS AT SM CINEMA

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Feb 26, 3pm & 6pm

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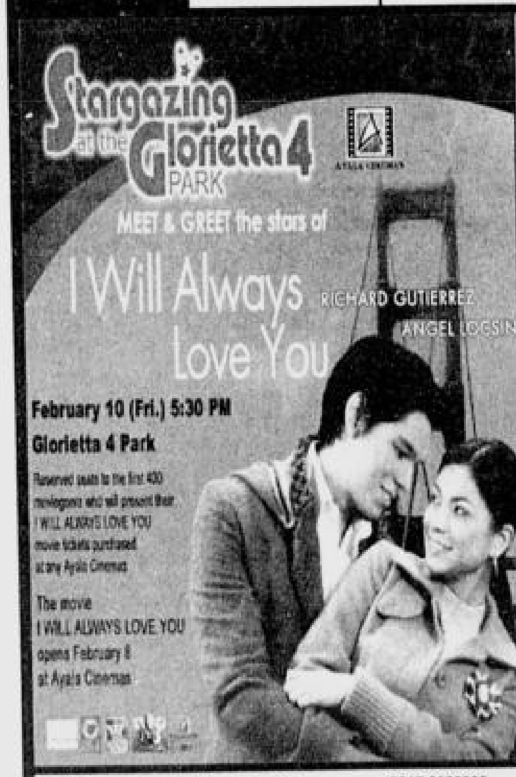
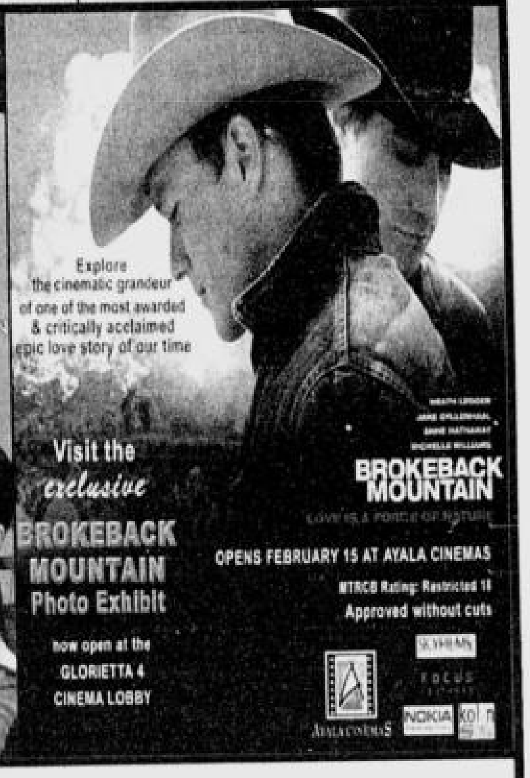
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
G1 GLORIETTA 1	DERAILED	SAW 2	UNDERWORLD: EVOLUTION	BLOODRAYNE			
G4 GLORIETTA 4	PROOF	SAW 2	THX DERAILED GUARANTEED SEATS	ZATHURA	CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN 2	WALK THE LINE	BLOODRAYNE
GB1 GREENBELT 1	DERAILED	WALK THE LINE					
GB3 GREENBELT 3	THX DERAILED GUARANTEED SEATS	THX WALK THE LINE GUARANTEED SEATS	CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN 2 GUARANTEED SEATS	SAW 2 GUARANTEED SEATS	PROOF GUARANTEED SEATS		
ATC ALABANG TOWN CENTER	THX WALK THE LINE	PROOF	DERAILED	BLOODRAYNE	SAW 2		
ACC AYALA CENTER CEBU	DERAILED	LITTLE MANHATTAN	THE MAID	HALF LIGHT			


Stargazing at the Glorietta 4 PARK
MEET & GREET the stars of
I Will Always Love You
RICHARD GUTIERREZ
ANGEL LOCSIN
February 10 (Fri.) 5:30 PM
Glorietta 4 Park
Reserved seats to the first 400 moviegoers who will present their I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU movie tickets purchased at any Ayala Cinemas
The movie I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU opens February 8 at Ayala Cinemas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BROKEBACK MOUNTAIN
LOVE IS A FORCE OF NATURE
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① WALK THE LINE
② UNDERWORLD: EVOLUTION
③ BLOODRAYNE
④ DERAILED
⑤ SAW 2

EVENTS! EVENTS!

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The 2 tickets must be bought for the same movie and on the same day.

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The moviegoer may only draw once for every pair of tickets bought.

Per DTI-NCR Permit No. A2-075 Series of 2006

MARKET! MARKET!
The fun is in the finds

LEO Martinez: "We do not recognize Vic del Rosario as spokesman for the film industry."

MMFF pie

From page A2-2

signed by Executive Secretary Eduardo R. Ermita, by way of granting the request made by Vicente del Rosario Jr., Presidential consultant for the entertainment industry.

Del Rosario then drafted a letter dated Jan. 31 informing the FAP of the changes.

The funds in contention are the earnings of the MMFF 2005, which comes from "the amusement taxes collected by local government units," Martinez explained. "It is not right for LGU funds to be funneled to national offices like the FDCP and the OMB, which can very well support themselves with budgets from the General Appropriations Act."

Through the years, the MMFF Sharing Scheme has undergone numerous revisions but, Martinez pointed out, this latest alteration "violates" Sec. 17 of RA 9167: An Act Creating the FDCP.

Common stand

"Sec. 17 clearly states that the FDCP may accept donations and grants from various sources, domestic or foreign, except from movie producers and distributors for purposes relevant to its functions," said Martinez. "Moreover, Del Rosario, who is also Viva chair and chief executive officer, is giving preference to offices headed by people closely identified with him: Jackie Atienza of the FDCP and Edu Manzano of the OMB."

Last Thursday, the FAP met with the Anti-Piracy Council and other industry leaders and arrived at a common stand.

"We denounce Del Rosario's [manipulation of] the MMFF Sharing Scheme," Martinez stressed. "He has no moral authority to initiate this move. We do not recognize Del Rosario as spokesman for the film industry."

DID YOU KNOW...

ALTHOUGH IT LEFT Sundance empty-handed, Auraeus Solito's "Ang Pagdadalaga ni Maximo Oliveros" was named Best Asian Film by the Network of Asian Cinema at the 35th Rotterdam International Film Festival, held in the Netherlands last week. It tied with "The Lost Hum" from Japan.

In Sundance, producer Raymond Lee reported, "Maximo's" four screenings were fully booked.

As for the reviews, Anthony Kaufman of indieWIRE and Village Voice said: "Genuine international discovery… difficult to resist." And Dennis Harvey of Variety: "Persuasive."

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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

BUSINESS

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Editor **Raul O. Marcelo**
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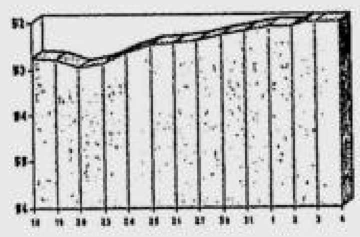

JANUARY FEBRUARY

PESO-DOLLAR RATE

₱ 51.605 = $ 1

As of 5 p.m., Feb. 6, 2006

¥ 118.68 = $ 1

As of 5 p.m., Feb. 6, 2006

GOLD: **$572.40-572.90**

per ounce Hong Kong, Feb. 6, 2006

STOCK MARKET

Shares close slightly lower

SHARE PRICES CLOSED 0.26 PERCENT lower yesterday on continued profit-taking in the majors after recent gains, dealers said.

Wall Street's decline Friday and concerns over the prospect of a more prolonged rise in US interest rates also weighed on sentiment, they said.

The composite index fell 5.58 points to 2,133.13 after trading between 2,126.61 and 2,141.50. Volume was 865.5 million

SHARES/ B2

BSP says $10.4B in local funds invested overseas

By Daxim L. Lucas

SPECIAL REPORT

HAVING EARNED SUBSTANTIAL FINANCIAL WEALTH FROM A long career in banking, Mr. Cruz now invests his money with the aim of protecting its value and getting the right return.

This means parking his money in a slew of investment vehicles like stocks, bonds, mutual funds and money market placements.

"I even have ROPs," Cruz said. "It's part of my diversification strategy."

ROPs—bankers' jargon for "Republic of the Philippines"—refer to dollar-denominated bonds sold by the Philippine government abroad when borrowing money from foreign banks. Mr. Cruz said these ROPs represent one of the most important parts of his investment portfolio.

But Mr. Cruz is no ordinary investor. He is Omar Cruz, the treasurer of the Republic of the Philippines, the man tasked by the President to manage and oversee the government's efforts to manage its finances mainly by selling bonds both here and abroad.

Like most high-net worth—and well-informed—investors in this country, Cruz sees the need to "diversify" his holdings not only by buying different kinds of investments, but by actually sending their money to safer shores abroad.

Exported capital

According to the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP), some $10.4 billion worth of the country's resources—more than P540 billion at current exchange rates—are lodged in foreign assets via banks domiciled in foreign countries.

The amount represents roughly a tenth of the value of the local economy in 2005 of about P5 trillion.

"A significant portion of this is invested in ROPs," BSP managing director Celia Gonzales

RP INVESTORS/ B2

WHAT'S INSIDE

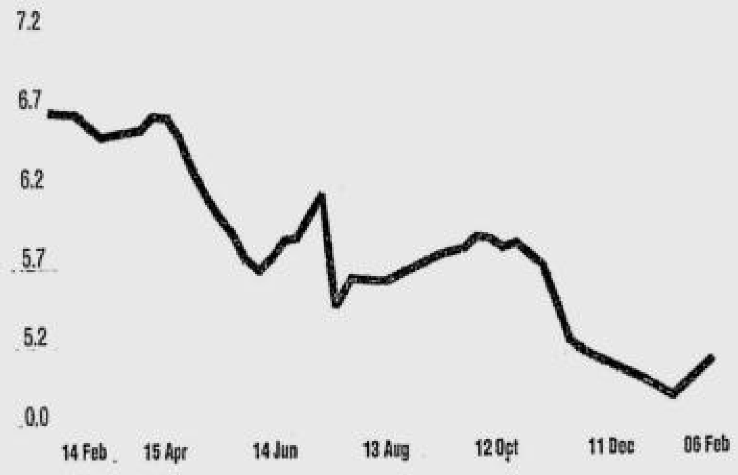
Treasury sees budget gap below P125B /B2

World Bank loan eyed for LRT 1 extension /B3

Peso hits over 3-yr high /B3

91-day Treasury bill rates

Feb. 14, 2005- Feb. 6, 2006



91-day T-bill rate inches up to 5.097%

By Michelle V. Remo

THE BELLWETHER 91-DAY TREASURY bill rate inched up by 23.4 basis points to 5.097 percent yesterday, with Treasury officials finally giving in to market pressure after rejecting all bids for the T-bill in the past two auctions.

The yield of the three-month government securities could have gone even higher at 5.239 percent had all bids were accepted at yesterday's auctions.

The Treasury accepted only P425 million worth of bids compared with the government's programmed borrowing through the 91-day bills of P1 billion.

"People are willing to buy and sell 91-day at that level. We accepted a rate where the secondary market was trading," National Treasurer Omar Cruz said in a briefing after the auctions.

91-DAY/ B2

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Fixed income exchange honors top dealers

By Doris C. Dumlao

SECURITY BANK, BANK OF THE Philippine Islands, China Bank, HSBC and Metrobank were the five most active trading banks at the country's pioneering fixed income exchange for 2005.

Philippine Dealing and Exchange Corp. (PDEx), which started the annual recognition of FX participants, named the five banks as having executed the highest peso value of trades in the inter-dealer negotiated dealing platform of its fixed income exchange last year.

PDEx president Cesar Crisol said this confirmed "the ability of participants to face the growing demands of a changing market, providing an impetus to keep improvements going in developing the local capital market."

Although the annual recognition was now only based on the value of trades, the exchange plans to identify other criteria for its "PDEx Annual Achievement Awards" based on the participants' contribution to the advancement of the capital market reform agenda.

PDS Group president and CEO Vicente Castillo said the awards were "a recognition of their efforts in providing liquidity through their trading and market-making activities."

He hailed the five banks for their "commitment in ensuring the validity of interest rate benchmarks through dealt trades."

Treasury sees budget gap below ₱125B

By Michelle V. Remo

NATIONAL TREASURER OMAR CRUZ SAID the government could easily outperform the official target of cutting the budget deficit to P125 billion this year given the positive momentum created by its fiscal performance in 2005.

Cruz said that with the larger tax base, the government could generate revenues much higher than last year's. The larger tax base is partly a result of the implementation of the VAT Reform Law, which lifted the value-added tax exemption of oil, electricity and other products and services.

Total government revenues last year reached P795.7 billion, without the full impact of the VAT law that took effect only last November. The law did not only expand the coverage of the VAT since November, but also raised the tax rate from 10 to 12 percent last Feb. 1.

The government's target of a P125-billion deficit this year translates to a deficit-to-GDP (gross domestic product) ratio of 2.1 percent. Cruz said this ratio could be easily surpassed given the huge revenue potential of the government's revenue-raising measures.

Cruz noted that in 2005, the government was targeting a deficit-to-GDP ratio of 3.4 percent, but it actually registered a much better figure of only 2.7 percent.

Given that the actual deficit-to-GDP ratio had been declining by about one percentage point every year in the past few years, it was likely that the government could achieve a ratio better than the 2.1 percent target for this year.

This means that the P125-billion target, which corresponds to the 2.1-percent deficit-to-GDP ratio, could be surpassed, he said.

In 2003, the deficit-to-GDP ratio stood at 4.75 percent. It went down to 3.95 percent in 2004 and to 2.7 percent in 2005.

Shares close slightly lower

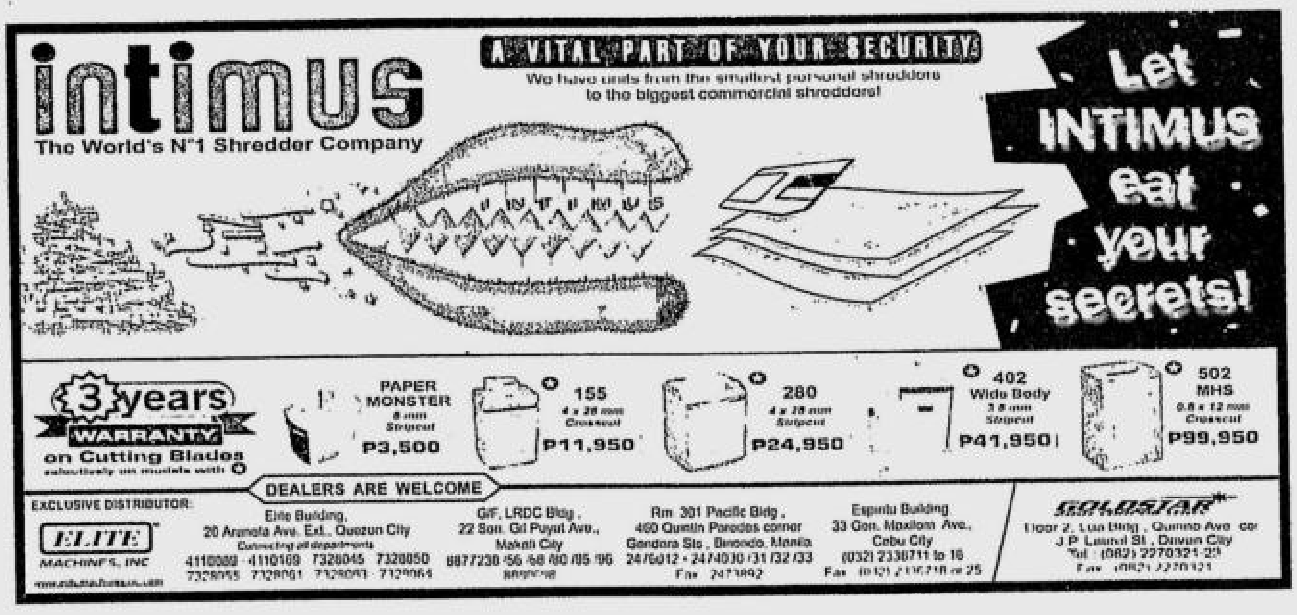
From page B1

shares worth P505.37 million.

The broader all-shares index fell 2.47 points to 1,022.27.

Losers led gains 40 to 27, with 59 stocks unchanged.

AFP



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STATEMENT OF CONDITION

(Head Office and Branches)
As of December 29, 2005

ASSETS	
Cash and Cash Items	₱ 7,606,066,126
Due from Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas	18,623,468,503
Due from Other Banks	23,466,145,758
Interbank Loans Receivable	56,269,989,832
Trading Account Securities (Net)	3,629,019,932
Investment in Bonds and Other Debt Instruments (Net)	90,309,909,861
Loans, Discounts and Advances (Net)	215,727,019,039
Equity Investments (Net)	17,507,212,394
Bank Premises, Furniture, Fixtures and Equipment (Net)	8,256,279,072
Other Assets (Net):	56,183,909,590
Property Owned/Acquired	29,537,236,866
Others	26,646,672,724
TOTAL ASSETS	₱ 497,579,020,107
LIABILITIES	
Demand Deposits	₱ 19,296,872,936
Savings Deposits	281,678,971,759
Time Deposits	78,163,360,171
Special/Other Deposits	322,950,789
Due to Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas	209,605,529
Due to Banks	23,434,890
Outstanding Checks / Payment Orders	979,062,232
Bills Payable:	33,134,169,030
BSP - Rediscounts/Special Programs	788,674,500
Interbank Borrowings	15,713,994,234
Others	16,631,500,296
Unearned Income and Other Deferred Credits	1,751,062,121
Other Liabilities	21,284,199,749
Unsecured Subordinated Debt (Inclusive of Unamortized Premium/Discount)	17,072,463,717
TOTAL LIABILITIES	453,916,152,923
CAPITAL ACCOUNTS	
Capital Stock	32,673,019,000
Surplus	8,477,565,090
Surplus Reserves	507,810,343
Other Capital Accounts	2,004,472,751
TOTAL CAPITAL ACCOUNTS	43,662,867,184
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND CAPITAL ACCOUNTS	₱497,579,020,107
CONTINGENT ACCOUNTS	
Unused Commercial Letters of Credit	₱ 10,353,838,938
Bills for Collection	1,805,385,854
Spot/Future Exchange Bought	10,213,356,755
Spot/Future Exchange Sold	8,767,310,960
Assets Held in Trust Investment Management Agreement	155,950,371,052
Invested In:	
Government Securities	104,694,446,421
Other Securities, Debt Instruments and Shares of Stocks	9,030,806,547
Loans and Discounts	16,374,044,815
Other Assets	25,851,073,269
Accountabilities:	
Trust and Other Fiduciary	71,767,973,746
Common Trust Funds	81,141,655,555
Investment/Fund Management	2,584,584,054
Unearned Income and Other Accountabilities	456,157,697
Other Contingent Accounts	10,931,750,528
TOTAL CONTINGENT ACCOUNTS	₱ 198,022,014,087

*Other Information:

1. Deposits of:	
a) Government	₱ 488,377,446
b) Banks	1,298,266,690
c) Trust Department	98,692,174

2. Compliance with Magna Carta Law:

	Small Enterprises	Medium Enterprises
Prescribed Ratio of Compliance:	6%	2%
Actual Compliance:	9.20%	10.95%

3. Amount of non-performing loans	23,022,738,710
4. Ratio of non-performing loans to total loan portfolio	8.28%
5. Amount of classified loans and other risk assets	61,530,791,145
6. General provision for loan and other losses	2,184,776,795
7. Specific provision for loan and other losses	18,341,558,777
8. Return on Equity (ROE)	9.30%
9. Amount of DOSRI loans/advances	11,535,271,731
10. Ratio of DOSRI loans/advances to total loan portfolio	4.01%
11. Amount of past due DOSRI loans/advances	750,000
12. Ratio of past due DOSRI loans/advances to total loan portfolio	0.00%

A. Directors, Officers, Stockholders & Related Interests (DOSRI)	
i. Loans, other credit accommodations & guarantees classified as DOSRI accounts under regulations existing prior to the effectivity of BSP Circular No. 423	₱ 11,433,580,838
ii. New DOSRI loans, other credit accommodations & guarantees granted after the effectivity of BSP Circular No. 423	101,690,895
B. Non-DOSRI Loans prior to BSP Circular No. 423 dated March 15, 2004:	
i. Loans, other credit accommodations and guarantees, as well as availments of previously approved loans and committed credit lines not considered DOSRI accounts prior to the issuance of BSP Circular No. 423 but are allowed a transition period as provided in said Circular	4,535,652,132

* Amended to conform with Circular No. 208 dated August 17, 1999 and Memorandum to All Banks dated November 29, 1999

REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES)
CITY OF MAKATI) S.S.

[illegible]

(Sgd.) JOSHUA E. NAING*
SVP-Controller

(Sgd.) ANTONIO S. ABACAN, JR.
President

[illegible]

(Sgd.) CYNTHIA G. RUIZ
Notary Public
Until December 31, 2006
[illegible]

Doc. No. 345
Page No. 50
Book No. [illegible]
Series of 2006

CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF CONDITION

(Bank and its Subsidiaries and Affiliates)
As of December 29, 2005

ASSETS	
Cash and Cash Items	₱ 8,428,175,045
Due from Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas	20,761,345,819
Due from Other Banks	29,044,507,980
Interbank Loans Receivable	56,269,989,832
Trading Account Securities (Net)	15,679,821,102
Investment in Bonds and Other Debt Instruments (Net)	111,448,083,718
Loans, Discounts and Advances (Net)	260,290,745,082
Equity Investments (Net)	7,394,914,526
Bank Premises, Furniture, Fixtures and Equipment (Net)	10,283,637,521
Other Assets (Net):	66,891,213,650
Property Owned/Acquired	32,431,250,579
Others	34,459,963,071
TOTAL ASSETS	₱ 586,492,434,275
LIABILITIES	
Demand Deposits	₱ 21,038,302,184
Savings Deposits	290,298,862,903
Time Deposits	113,008,206,271
Special/Other Deposits	322,950,789
Due to Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas	227,688,417
Due to Banks	23,434,890
Outstanding Checks/Payment Orders	1,167,211,860
Bills Payable:	61,385,395,933
BSP - Rediscounts/Special Programs	788,674,500
Interbank Borrowings	22,528,180,234
Deposit Substitutes	19,937,859,159
Others	18,130,682,040
Unearned Income and Other Deferred Credits	4,631,450,734
Other Liabilities	25,425,700,241
Unsecured Subordinated Debt (Inclusive of Unamortized Premium/Discount)	17,072,463,717
TOTAL LIABILITIES	534,601,667,939
Minority Interest in Allied Undertakings/Subsidiaries/Affiliates	2,380,166,748
CAPITAL ACCOUNTS	
Capital Stock	32,673,019,000
Surplus	13,148,762,459
Surplus Reserves	507,810,343
Other Capital Accounts	3,181,007,786
TOTAL CAPITAL ACCOUNTS	49,510,599,588
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND CAPITAL ACCOUNTS	₱586,492,434,275
CONTINGENT ACCOUNTS	
Unused Commercial Letters of Credit	₱ 10,485,910,590
Bills for Collection	1,855,522,527
Spot/Future Exchange Bought	10,213,356,754
Spot/Future Exchange Sold	8,767,310,960
Assets Held in Trust Investment Management Agreements	156,115,973,734
Invested In:	
Government Securities	104,696,558,826
Other Securities, Debt Instruments and Shares of Stocks	9,137,143,161
Loans and Discounts	16,374,044,815
Other Assets	25,908,226,932
Accountabilities:	
Trust and Other Fiduciary	71,933,576,428
Common Trust Funds	81,141,655,555
Investment/Fund Management	2,584,584,054
Unearned Income and Other Accountabilities	456,157,697
Other Contingent Accounts	11,062,249,834
TOTAL CONTINGENT ACCOUNTS	₱ 198,500,324,399

Other Information:

1. Deposits of:	
a) Government	₱ 488,377,446
b) Banks	1,323,142,960
c) Trust Department	153,634,168

2. List of Bank's Financial Subsidiaries:

- a) First Metro International Investment Co., Ltd. - HK
- b) First Metro Investment Corporation
- c) Philippine Savings Bank
- d) MBTC Venture Capital Corporation
- e) Metropolitan Bank (Bahamas) Ltd.
- f) Metrobank Card Corporation (formerly Unibancard Corporation)
- g) MB Remittance Centre, Ltd.-HK
- h) Metro Remittance Center, Inc., NY (formerly Asia Money Link Corp.)
- i) Metro Remittance-Italia SPA
- j) ORIX Metro Leasing and Finance Corporation
- k) Solid Philippines Venture and Capital Corporation
- l) MBTC Exchange Services, GmbH, Austria
- m) Metro Remittance (UK) Ltd.
- n) Metro Remittance Singapore PTE Ltd.
- o) Metro Remittance Center, S.A.-Spain

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RP investors send . . .

From page B1

said in an interview. Funds used to buy ROPs eventually find their way back to local shores to fund the government's chronic cash shortfall, but only after white-shoe investment bankers in New York and London take their fat commissions.

According to the central bank, Filipinos had a total of $15.7 billion deposited in the local banking system as of last month. Of this amount, about $10.4 billion is actually invested in dollar-denominated securities.

Gonzalez estimates that two-thirds of this amount was used by Filipinos to buy dollar bonds issued by their own government, while another $1 billion was allocated to buy dollar bonds issued by local blue chip firms like companies of the Ayala conglomerate or Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co.

The central bank official, who is in charge with monitoring dollar flows into and out of the country, said this figure includes only funds invested offshore by Filipinos through their banks' trust departments and insurance firms.

"This doesn't include the investments of high net worth individuals," Gonzales said, most of whom can invest their money abroad without coursing them through traditional banking channels.

By all means, the treasury chief is not the only economic manager who invests his money abroad. Recent economic managers like former BSP Governor Rafael B. Buenaventura and former Finance Secretary Jose Isidro N. Camacho (at one point, the richest member of the Cabinet) have all admitted to having "about half" of their assets denominated in dollars and investments in dollar-denominated assets.

It is no longer strange that these people—custodians of their country's economy—find it necessary to invest their money elsewhere. "It is only but prudent," said one current central bank official, requesting anonymity. "You'll sleep better at night."

However, this roundabout way of investing and funding the government's cash needs has its costs.

Because of this inefficiency—having to export capital offshore before bringing it back onshore—the government has to pay expensive investment bankers and go on costly foreign roadshows, and pay more for "foreign" capital, while some local investors actually earn less than what they should.

Unpopular solution

In recent years, efforts have been made to reform the local capital markets by introducing a bond exchange, similar in concept to the stock market, where public and private debt can be traded in a more transparent manner.

Former banker Vicente Castillo, who now chairs PDS Holdings Corp., the parent of the bond exchange, has been shouting himself hoarse, trying to convince a skeptical banking community about the soundness of his plan.

"If you have domestic debt issued in foreign currency and funded by local citizens, that points to some kind of inefficiency in the system," Castillo said, explaining that a bond exchange would help reduce—although not completely eliminate—the need for borrowers like the government to go abroad for money.

His proposed bond exchange, however, has encountered stiff opposition from distrustful bankers and regulators reluctant to surrender control of the bond market's future direction to his proposed "solution."

"With these reforms, [interest rate] spreads will go down," Castillo said. "Investors will earn more and borrowers will pay less."

What Castillo doesn't say is that his plan will cut out banks from the lucrative loop by bringing the borrowers closer to their funders—a system bankers are silently opposing.

Treasury's Cruz, however, is ambivalent to the plan.

"It doesn't matter to me what system you use," he said, relating his stand on the proposed capital market reforms. "What I'm interested in is getting the best price for the Republic."

So far, Cruz has done an excellent job of cutting the country's cost of foreign borrowing. Since he assumed office last year, Cruz said that the country's borrowing costs have declined by over two percentage points on the average—a total savings of close to P500 million annually—though he admits that this was prompted by a combination fiscal reforms and hard-nosed bargaining with foreign bond underwriters.

"In the end, you can have all the capital market reforms, but it is still the fundamental fiscal picture that will determine your credit ratings," Cruz said, referring to the "junk" rating of Philippine bonds sold overseas.

Pending a ratings upgrade and a more efficient capital market, however, Cruz and many other economic managers will continue to "diversify" their investments by sending their money abroad.

Indeed, the Philippines may be starved for foreign portfolio and direct investments, but for now, its residents would continue to send their money abroad.

91-day T-bill rate . . .

From page B1

He explained that it was reasonable to accept a higher rate as long as it was in line with the levels in the secondary market.

Analysts said the rate for the benchmark 91-day bills could have already bottomed when it reached 4.863 percent last Jan. 16, and could not go down any further. The last rate recorded in January was the lowest since August 2002.

The 182-day bills fetched a rate of 6.221 percent, or 4.7 basis points lower than the previous week's. Bids for the 182-day bills reached P5.04 billion compared with the programmed debt offering of only P1 billion. Due to the big demand for the six-month paper, the Treasury decided to accept P1.4 billion worth of bids.

The rate for the 364-day bills settled at 7.319 percent, 3 basis points higher than the rate recorded during last week's auction.

National gov't debt declined to ₱3.91T in November

By Michelle V. Remo

THE NATIONAL GOVERNMENT'S debt dropped for the second consecutive month in November last year as the declining budget deficit eased the need for borrowings.

Statistics showed that the government's debt went down to P3.91 trillion as of end-November last year from P3.95 trillion in October of the same year. The October figure was 2 percent lower than the P4.02 trillion in September.

The decline in the debt figure did not mean the government had stopped borrowing. This indicated that the government paid more maturing obligations than the amount borrowed in November.

The Department of Finance said that of the P3.91 trillion worth of debt, 45 percent was owed to foreign creditors while 55 percent came from domestic lenders.

Foreign debt as of November, which stood at P1.75 trillion, was 3.2 percent lower than the end-October figure. The DOF said that in the case of foreign obligations, the government registered higher net payments than net borrowings in November.

The decrease in foreign liabilities was also partly attributed to the appreciation of the peso and other currencies against the US dollar, which made foreign debts cheaper in peso terms. The DOF said the weakening of the dollar helped reduce foreign debt by P53 billion.

Domestic debt, however, hit P2.16 trillion or 0.7 percent higher than the amount recorded in October. This was due to the increase in the issuance of government securities in the domestic market.

The DOF also reported that the national government's contingent debt, composed of liabilities of state-owned companies that carried sovereign guarantee, stood at P592 billion as of November. The figure was lower than the P602 billion recorded in October.

The DOF said the decline in contingent debt was also due to the appreciation of the peso, which reduced the peso value of the foreign liabilities of state-owned companies.

World Bank loan eyed for LRT 1 extension

No gov't counterpart funding needed

By Clarissa S. Batino

THE WORLD BANK IS WILLING TO FUND AS much as half of the estimated $800-million financing requirement of the Light Rail Transit Line 1 extension to Cavite, LRT Authority administrator Mel Robles said.

Robles said the multilateral creditor had expressed willingness to provide low-cost funds for the civil works component of the project, which was estimated to account for half of the project cost.

"The World Bank is willing to finance portion of the project even without counterpart funding from the government," said Robles.

He said the cost of the project was expected to be lower than the unsolicited offer of $867 million since it would be auctioned off. The plan is to hold the bidding within the first semester.

The first phase of the LRTA Line 1 extension will extend the railway up to Bacoor in Cavite. It may later be extended further to Imus and to Dasmariñas, also in Cavite.

LRT Line 1 carries an average of 350,000 passengers a day. With the extension, this is expected to increase to 400,000.

The LRTA scrapped last year an agreement with Canadian firm SNC Lavalin, which had offered to undertake the 12-kilometer extension of LRT Line 1 to Bacoor Cavite from Baclaran for $867 million.

Robles said the LRTA must fulfill two things before it can bid out the mass transport extension to Cavite—to pay SNC Lavalin the balance of $5 million for the feasibility study and development plans it made for the project and to get the transportation department's endorsement for the project's inclusion in the medium-term priority investment plan.

Its inclusion in the medium-term plan will guarantee a budget cover from the national government, which will ensure that creditors will get paid.

The budget department has yet to release the $5 million (roughly P260 million) requested by the LRTA for the full payment of the feasibility study and development plan. The Canadian firm said it had spent $20 million for the feasibility study and development plans. This was, however, reduced to $10 million, of which, $5 million was already paid.

International Finance Corp., the World Bank's investment arm and a consultant for the project, believed the unsolicited offer of SNC Lavalin was too high, according to the LRTA.

The Canadian firm also sought a guarantee cover from the government, which made its offer even more disadvantageous to the government, Robles said.

The government received the unsolicited offer from SNC Lavalin more than five years ago but the project could not proceed because of doubts over the economic viability of the project.

PSBank raising capital to ₱6B

By Doris C. Dumlao

PHILIPPINE SAVINGS BANK, THE THRIFT bank unit of Metropolitan Bank and Trust Co., plans to jack up its capital base by the end of the year to P6 billion, from the current level of P4.8 billion, to fund further expansion.

The country's second largest thrift bank recently raised its capital via a P2-billion tier 2 offering. It plans to generate another P750 million in core capital through a stocks rights offering this semester.

PSBank tapped affiliate First Metro Investment Corp. to underwrite its planned rights offering.

In a recent press briefing, PSBank president Pascual Garcia said new challenges confronting the banking industry—the new accounting rules and the introduction of a new system in line with the Basle2 capital adequacy rule—would put a hefty premium to an institution's ability to improve risk management, establish a strong core business and build organizational competencies.

He said PSBank had long prepared for this challenging environment by developing new structures and beefing up its technology.

"We're not worried about Basle 2 because the bank is profitable. We're in good position to absorb these rules. The additional capital would be a buffer that will put us in a place where we could broaden the opportunities," he said.

Pre-need firms' trust funds up

PRE-NEED COMPANIES POSTED A 9.2-percent increase in their trust fund assets to P76.2 billion as of September last year, up by 9.2 percent from P69.8 billion in end-2004, the Philippine Federation of Pre-Need Plan Companies Inc. (PFPPCI) said in a statement.

Prudentialife president Jose Albert Alba, also an officer of the federation, said earnings from trust fund investments were boosted by the growth in the yields of stock market placements and long-term bond investments. He said stock prices grew by about 15 percent last year while yields of long-term bonds, by around 20 percent.

Trust fund income of pre-need firms grew to P3.88 billion as of end-September from P1.31 billion in December 2004.

PFPPCI said the industry figures came from the Securities and Exchange Commission and covered 47 pre-need firms. *Elizabeth L. Sanchez*

GOINGS ON

Asian Spirit expanding

ASIAN SPIRIT AIRLINES RECENTLY LAUNCHED its Manila-Davao, Davao-Manila flights. The move is in line with the airline's expansion program.

The daily morning flight out of Davao City is at 5:45 a.m. while the last flight is at 5:30 p.m.

Asian Spirit will use its newly acquired 100-seater British Aerospace 146 jet to service this route. The airline also plans to fly to Palau and Manado, Indonesia from Davao.

iBank's iCheckpoints

International Exchange Bank (iBank) recently re-introduced iCheckpoints, a checking account that earned points that could be used to redeem premium items.

iCheckpoints account holders, with at least P25,000 in average daily balance, will earn points that can be exchanged for gift certificates from selected shops and restaurants, top of the line audio video equipment and plane tickets.

23rd SM mall

SM Prime Holdings Inc. is scheduled to open its 23rd mall, the 79,000-square meter SM City Sta. Rosa, in Sta. Rosa, Laguna on Feb. 17. This is in line with efforts to expand SMPH's activities into the provinces.

The two-level mall is a 10-minute drive from the Mamplasan exit. SM City Sta. Rosa offers one-stop shopping convenience as it includes a variety of retail establishments, along with the SM Department store and SM Supermarket.

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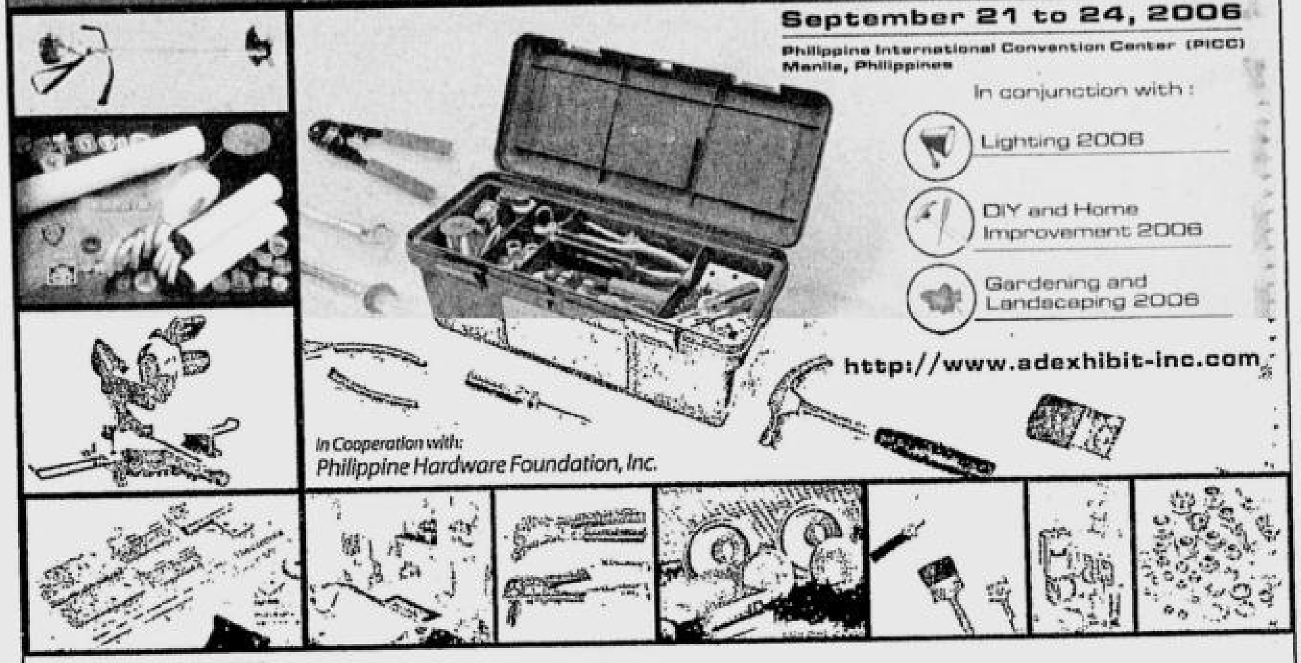

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This family business management course will help you identify and analyze the key issues and challenges of family corporations. You will understand the distinctive qualities and interrelationships of family corporations as well as recognize potential areas for improvement within the family business. Through the viewpoints of family dynamics and family business systems, you would able to develop and implement improvements to ensure growth. For maximum benefit and impact, family corporations should be represented by at least two family members (from different generations) and at least one professional manager. However, individual enrollment is also acceptable.

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BUSINESS SYSTEMS
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LEARNING PROCESS
A variety of teaching methods will be used- lectures, workshops and group discussions and presentations. However, foremost among the teaching methods utilized at AIM is the case method, a technique pioneered by the Harvard Business School and adapted to the Asian setting by AIM.
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PROGRAM DIRECTOR

Prof. Ma. Virginia B. Quintos-Gonzales has been the research champion of the Managing Family Corporations Program in AIM. She has been Program Director of the Famcor Program since it was launched in 1998. Prof. Gonzales holds a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology from the University of the Philippines (1983) and a Master in Business Administration from the Ateneo Graduate School of Business (1992). She earned her Professional Diploma in Pastoral Counseling and Family Ministry from the Center of Family Ministries (CEFAM), Loyola School of Theology, Ateneo de Manila University (2004). She is currently taking her Ph.D. in Organizational Development at the Southeast Asian Interdisciplinary Development Institute (SAIDI).

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Editor **Aries Espinosa**

All-Filipino hotel chain steps up to international market

PHILIPPINE CHAIN LEGEND HOTELS INTERnational (LHI) Corp is stepping up the plate of Asian tourism and taking a swing at the global market with its first-time participation in the Asean Tourism Forum 2006 in Davao City. The 14-year old company says it is driven by its core strength as a super-value hotel chain and its distinctive identity as an all-Filipino owned and managed organization.

"The products and services we offer are at a price the market does not usually expect. What they get is much more than what they paid for. And in terms of service, we give them more than what is expected – a very Filipino trait. More than a hotel room, we give them an experience," explained LHI founder and chair Wyden King.

He revealed that the company was working on several fronts to promote Legend properties and Philippine destinations. Talks are underway with various airlines, local tour operators and international wholesalers from Asia, Europe and US markets. LHI is also working on chartered flights from Korea, China, Taiwan and Hong Kong which are major contributors to inbound tourism traffic.

"We are moving towards the market of experienced travelers who want to extend their buying capacity. European travelers, for instance, will want to maximize a 21-day stay in Asia by making side trips to several destinations in the region. The Philippines should and will be among their choices," he added. "Legend is building the partnerships now to develop that super-value experience that is the trademark of our properties."

LHI boasts of five properties with four brands in Metro Manila and Palawan, each catering to specific markets. Two of the properties are represented at the Asean Tourism Forum: The Legend Villas is a 125-room sprawling hotel property that serves the corporate markets of Metro Manila's prime business and commercial districts of Ortigas Center and Makati. It also attracts a steady stream of family groups and young week-enders who value the bi-level rooms that offer individual beds for as much as 6 to 8 guests per room. Jacuzzis in the premier rooms are also an added distinctive feature for business travelers seeking the comforts and leisure of genuine relaxation.

The Legend Palawan in Puerto Princesa is the provincial capital's top address for business and leisure travelers with a convention center and expansive rooms to cater to large corporate groups and big families. The hotel also provides an inhouse tour service dubbed The Legend Palawan Experience (PaX), which offers tours of the city and outlying islands. This has become a highly rated tour by previous visitors, foreign and locals alike.

LHI also has The Mabuhay Manor, a hotel largely serving returning Filipino nationals as well as foreign travelers needing value-for-money accommodations close to the airport and business establishments. Kabayan Hotel Pasay and Kabayan Hotel Cubao on the other hand, caters to skilled overseas Filipino workers and domestic business travelers. These three properties are hotels of choice for their proximity to transport terminals, their efficient personalized service and high-quality food service, and most of all, their convenient room features that welcome large families and group travelers.

As a super-value chain, King emphasized LHI's efforts to meet the needs of its markets every step of the way and at the best cost. "We're very market-focused and product-driven. We went out to challenge what they said could not be done, and have built our name on providing value and innovation," he said.

The industry standard for multiple hotel room occupancy, for example, is at a maximum of four guests. Legend hotels have rooms that comfortably accommodate six guests or more with individual beds in almost 70 percent of the properties.

"We were also told that bi-level rooms just won't sell to the corporate market. The Legend Villas has certainly proven them wrong. Spacious, multi-occupant rooms are Legend innovations," he said.

The Legend Villas offers Family Rooms, Villa Suites and Team Suites, units which enable large parties to stay together. Each occupant comfortably has his own individual bed in these rooms. The latter two are bi-level units that have added amenities like living and dining areas, kitchen facilities, individual closets and reading lamps. Villa Suites Premier even have a jacuzzi.

Aside from regular rooms, The Legend Palawan offers Family Suites with six double deck beds and kitchen facilities. With the addition of The Legend Palawan Convention Center, the hotel is the choice venue for the leisure and MICE market.

Although Legend hotels vary architecturally, King said the warm and friendly Filipino service and the easy ambience of a Filipino home are standard features that are consistently maintained in every property.

"Legend provides an overall value experience geared towards what the market needs and expects. We are proudly Filipino and are highly differentiated that way," he said.

TAGAYTAY HIGHLANDS, HSBC INK AGREEMENT

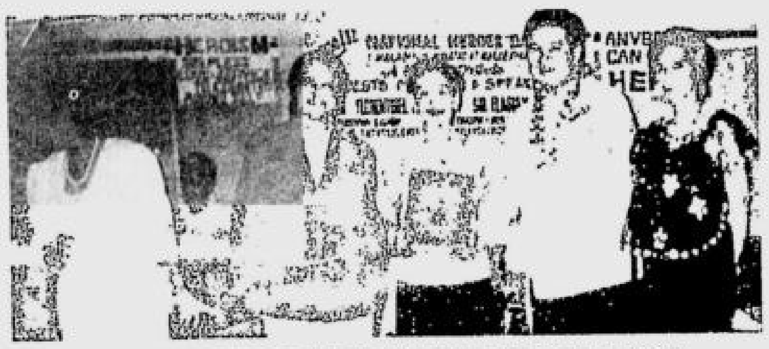
Tagaytay Highlands recently signed an agreement with HSBC wherein Highlands' members (Tagaytay Highlands International Golf Club, The Country Club at Tagaytay Highlands and Tagaytay Midlands Golf Club) will get the following perks: for existing Mabuhay Miles Visa cardholders - upon enrollment in the Auto-Charge arrangement, members can auto-charge all their monthly dues and expenses for guaranteed free miles. This will make payment of club dues and expenses easier for members plus, they get the chance to fly via PAL for free. As an added bonus, auto charged dues and expenses will earn double the miles until March 2006. For new applicants, they will get all the above plus a 2-year waiver on annual fee, annual mileage fee for Mabuhay Miles Visa Classic Card (or 1st year annual fee waiver for Mabuhay Miles Visa Gold) . Present during the signing were (from left): Claire Ann Yap, SVP and head of cards, HSBC; Warner Manning, CEO, HSBC; Willy Ocier, vice chair, Tagaytay Highlands; Jerry Tiu, president, Tagaytay Highlands and Nick Celdran, general manager, Tagaytay Highlands.

BUDGET AND PARTNERS AT PRONTO! OPENING

Budget Car & Truck Rental Philippines was honored to have as guests their business partners from Total and Japan PNB Leasing Corp at the recent opening of Pronto! Auto Services. Pronto Auto Services located at Km. 21 West Service Road in Cupang Muntinlupa is the newest one-stop-shop for all auto care needs. Automatically, all the car repairs and maintenance of corporate clients of Budget Phils will be handled by Pronto! Photo shows (from left): engineer Andrew Bello of Total Phils Corp, exclusive supplier of lubricants for both Budget Car & Truck Rental Phils and Pronto! Auto Services; Etsuo Okumura, president of Japan PNB Leasing Corp; Isagani G. Buenaflor, president of Diamond IGB the company behind Budget and Pronto!; and Daisaku Shishido, vice president of Japan PNB Leasing Corp provider of Budget Financing and Credit Facility for Auto Loans.

MDH OPENS NEW REHABILITATION DEPARTMENT

Manila Doctors Hospital, Manila's only ISO certified hospital recently inaugurated its new Rehabilitation Department. Patients needing Rehabilitation Medicine treatment now enjoy the spacious and functional treatment areas - from physiatric evaluation to physical therapy, occupational therapy and speech therapy. This new facility is at the ground level of the new Doña Salustiaña Medical Tower. Photo shows: Dr. Arnel Malaya, chair, Department of Rehabilitation Medicine, MDH; Julie Yap Daza, media personality; Angelita Jao, corporate secretary and assistant treasurer, MDH; Aniceto Sobrepeña, president, MDH; and Dr. Dante Morales, medical director, MDH.



TOURISM PROFESSOR RECEIVES RECOGNITION

Dr. Zenaida L. Cruz (center), author of tourism textbooks, a tourism professor of the Polytechnic University of the Philippines and founding president of the Tourism Educators of Schools, Colleges and Universities, recently received the 2005 Gawad Bagong Bayani ng Lahing Kayumanggi given by the Media Writers Association of the Philippines at the Bayview Park Hotel recently. Presenting the award is Dr. John Florentine Teruel (2nd from right).

Fight asset foreclosures

IT'S UNIMAGINABLE THAT you're left with nothing when you default in your payments for a small amount of money that you borrowed. More often than not, everything else that you've mortgaged is taken away from you and all your assets are wiped out. This is a very real scenario that happens to many individuals and companies that don't know how to defend themselves from abusive creditors.

Asset foreclosures are financially crippling to businesses and emotionally draining for families who stand to lose their livelihood, their homes and other forms of property. It can destroy a well-running business, leave stakeholders dislocated, and families homeless. This should not happen.

Good lenders give defaulting borrowers a chance to restructure their loans. The bad and abusive ones simply foreclose on assets and properties without any consideration.

It is for these reasons that we need to learn how to fight unjust asset foreclosures. Learn how to employ the right legal defenses and attacks against these through the seminar, "Defensive and Offensive Strategies Against Asset Foreclosures."

The Center for Global Best Practices (telephone 842-7148 or 59) is organizing this pioneering 1-day event to be held on Feb. 10, at the Peninsula Hotel, Makati City. The lecture will teach and update participants on everything-you-need-to-know about the best legal techniques to prevent and fight asset foreclosures.

The seminar features lawyer Jim V. Lopez, author of the book on the asset protection law, and lawyer Arturo de Castro, who is known as the "foreclosure buster." They will both share their expertise by teaching participants effective strategies against asset foreclosures. Tools and techniques, updates and recent Supreme Court decisions are highlights of the discussion.

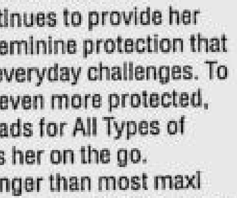
The seminar is a must for those in business, whether one is about to borrow money or is seeking effective remedies against asset foreclosure. What you will get out of this seminar will save you a bundle in legal costs now and in the future.

ProductFILES

Breeze through the new NLEX with EC Tag

AS IF TRAVELING AT the new North Luzon Expressway (NLEX) isn't already convenient enough, now, you are given the option to have it easier - much easier with the EC Tag transponder. The EC Tag is a small, communication device you can mount on the windshield of your Class 1 vehicle enabling you to pay your toll electronically at any toll plaza in the NLEX. With the EC Tag, toll payment is made quicker, more convenient, hassle-free and yes, cashless. It is prepaid, so you no longer have to rummage through your bag or pocket for coins every time you have to pay for toll. Plus, you can be sure that you are paying the exact - and correct - amount every time you exit. That means, no more queuing through the toll lane, no more waiting for change, no more hassle. What's more, the EC Tag gives you access to an exclusive and dedicated lane at every toll plaza in the NLEX, making your trip such a breeze. Best of all, the EC Tag is now being offered for a discounted price of only P1,500, plus an initial activation load of P 500. That's way down from the original price of P 2,200 on top of the initial activation cost. You can avail of the EC Tag at the NLE Customer Service Centers in Balintawak, Valenzuela, Bocaue, San Fernando and Tabang, Car World Pampanga, Ford Pampanga, Chevrolet Pampanga, Tire City Inc Pampanga and at SM Mall branches in North Edsa, Fairview, Marilao and San Fernando. But you have to hurry. Promo is good until April 9 only. For other details, call NLEX Customer Hotline at 580-8910 or visit www.nle.com.ph.

Another year for Sarah and Charmee



AS THE CHINESE New Year marches this 2006, Sarah Geronimo will be as hardworking as ever to keep up with the demands of her career. Her schedule will even be busier and with her active lifestyle, Charmee continues to provide her with the right kind of Feminine protection that she needs to face her everyday challenges. To keep Sarah Geronimo even more protected, Charmee's Feminine pads for All Types of Flow with Wings keeps her on the go. Charmee All Flow is longer than most maxi pads in the market for better protection. It has Anti-Leak Control Channels that allow even fluid distribution across the pad. It also has a Soft and Comfortable Cover leaving the skin feeling fresh and 'irritation-free'. Most of all, Charmee's unique Wetness Protection System locks in fluid as gel inside the pad leaving you worry-free all throughout the day. Charmee All Flow Feminine pads are individually-wrapped so you can just bring it with you anywhere conveniently. Best of all, it is so affordable at P2.25 per pad. Also available are Charmee Unscented Pantyliners for only 8.50 for pack of 8s and the new Charmee Feminine Wipes for only P21.50.

GRAND LAUNCHING CEREMONY!
TAGUDIN EVERLASTING MEMORIAL GARDENS
BIMMANGA TAGUDIN ILOCOS SUR
DEC. 27, 2005

TAGUDIN EVERLASTING MEMORIAL GARDENS LAUNCHED

A new and fully licensed memorial park named Tagudin Everlasting Memorial Gardens was launched recently at Brgy. Bimmanga, Tagudin, Ilocos Sur. Highly accessible and acknowledge for its complete amenities, and the development quality befitting a modern memorial park, the 1.8-hectares Tagudin Everlasting Memorial Gardens is lauded a major progress milestone for the Town. Present during the launching rites were Tagudin Mayor Roque Verzosa Jr. (4th from right), Vice Mayor Peter Manzano (center), SB Member Eliza Bunoan, engineer Onofre Emerito Bayuga, chairperson Alicia Lorena and landowners lawyer Virgilio Lagunilla and Lolita Sarhan. The Tagudin Everlasting Memorial Park is the successful development project of Hard Rock Property Ventures Inc, a real estate development company owned by a group of respected professionals and businessmen, headed by: Ricardo Ponciano, Dennis Booth, Dencio Bargas, Francisco Mendoza, Daniel Maningas and Carlos Soriano.

Bits Clips

MCS HS '56 golden year

THE MALATE CATHOLIC SCHOOL HIGH SCHOOL Class 1956 is celebrating its golden jubilee this year. They will be the special honorees of the school's general homecoming on Saturday, Feb. 11. Alumni from US and Canada will grace the affair that will begin with a mass at 3 p.m. Special entertainers will perform, followed by a buffet dinner starting at 6 p.m. All golden jubilarians are invited to contact Ramona Eribal de Ocampo (899-2272), Remedios Ortiz Bicomong (527-1746), Jose Ignacio (806-6917) and Bert Robles (827-8353).

CCP's 52nd Foundation Day

THE CENTRAL COLLEGES OF THE PHILIPPINES (CCP) enters a new milestone as they celebrate their 52nd Foundation Day on Feb. 9 to 12. Highlighting CCP's celebration are the "Mr. and Ms. CCP Campus Personality Pageant" on Feb. 10 and "MYX in 2006: Bands Showdown" on Feb. 11. All campus events will be open to the general public. Visit the Central Colleges of the Philippines at 52 Aurora Boulevard, Q.C. You can also contact their hotline at 715-5170, or log on to www.ccp.edu.ph for more inquiries and details.

SJS Nueva Ecija 60th year

ST. JOSEPH SCHOOL OF SAN JOSE CITY, NUEVA Ecija will celebrate its 60th Foundation Day on Feb. 16, 17, and 18. Grand Alumni Homecoming from Batch 1946 to 2005 will be on Feb. 18, mass at 7 a.m. Motorcade to follow. For High School Batch 1963 contact Citas Velasquez-Ramos 0917-5411105; Susie Azarcon 0918-9211013.

Camp Creatives

CAMP CREATIVES IS A WORKSHOP AIMED FOR up-and-coming advertising practitioners and students. There will be separate sessions for advertising people and the academe. The two-day workshop for young creatives was held on Jan. 23 and 24 while that for students will take place on Feb. 10 and 11. Venue will be at the Luzon Room of the Hyatt Regency Manila. The culminating activity of the workshop for the young creative professionals will be a competition. Winners will represent the Philippines in the Young Creatives contests sponsored by the Asian Adfest and the Cannes Lions Adfest. For inquiries and reservations, call Vanne Tomada at 893-1205.

UPH Dalta 30th year

THE UNIVERSITY OF PERpetual Help Dalta in Las Piñas City is celebrating its 30th Foundation Anniversary from Feb. 6 to 11, with sustained activities until March this year carrying the theme "30 years of Perpetualite Service as Helpers of God (1975-2005)". A major activity during the week is a research seminar open to all faculty from various universities in the country. The Research National Seminar-Workshop on Strengthening the Research Skills and Instructional Leadership of Criminology Engineering and Maritime Educators in the Philippines Towards Building Global Competitiveness (sponsored by R&DC and REDTI) will be held on Feb. 9 to 11, back to back with the UPHD Research Competition 2006. Cultural presentations will be held on Feb. 23 to 24. Other activities are also lined up for this much anticipated event. A Grand Alumni Homecoming will culminate the festivities on Feb. 25.

Health and hygiene confab

THE TWO-DAY 2ND INTERNATIONAL HEALTH and Hygiene Symposium at the Manila Peninsula Hotel in Makati City will kick-off on Feb. 9 at 9 a.m. With the theme "Better Health and Hygiene: Today's Challenges, Tomorrow's Hopes", the symposium is geared at determining the best possible development interventions to reduce the global health risks from unhygienic practices. It is hosted by Safeguard, which marks its 40th year of promoting health and hygiene.

Hyundai has arrived

WHAT USED TO BE A STRUGGLING COMPANY OUT of South Korea is now the seventh-largest carmaker in the world with 3.3 million vehicles produced last year. Hyundai is among the fastest-growing and most trusted automotive firms-enjoying a 360-percent sales improvement in the US and placing an impressive third among non-luxury brands in the 2005 Initial Quality Study of J.D. Power and Associates. Perhaps the latest crowning glory of the overachieving carmaker's numerous feats is the opening of its first-ever manufacturing plant in the United States. The $1.1-billion Alabama facility is Hyundai's ultimate tour de force-a huge banner announcing to the world that it has arrived and it is here not just to stay but to lead.

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In the advertisement of the **Department of Environment and Natural Resources-Environmental Management Bureau (DENR-EMB)** Joint Administrative Order No.03, Series of 2006 published in this paper on February 5, 2006, **Secretary Michael Defensor's** designation should have read **Secretary, DENR** and not Secretary, DOTC as published.

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NOTICE OF VACANT POSITIONS

STARCM is a special Project of the Government of the Philippines funded by the European Union and implemented by the Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR). The Project provides support for the development of agrarian reform communities in the provinces of Cotabato, Sultan Kudarat, Lanao del Norte and Lanao del Sur. The Project is seeking to fill the following positions in Kidapawan City or Iligan City:

CHIEF ACCOUNTANT (1) Duty Station Kidapawan City	Must be a Certified Public Accountant (CPA) with a minimum of five (5) years relevant work experience and be familiar with the financial regulations and procedures of government agencies. Experience working with Foreign-funded Projects will be a distinct advantage.
MONITORING & EVALUATION SPECIALIST (1) Duty Station: Iligan City	Should have a Bachelor's degree in Economics, Social Science, Development Planning or Public Administration. A Master's degree in these or related field will be a distinct advantage. S/he should have at least five (5) years experience in participatory planning, monitoring and evaluation, design and implementation of baseline studies in project evaluation and impact evaluation.
ASSISTANT RURAL INFRASTRUCTURE ENGINEER (1) Duty Station: Iligan City	Must be a Licensed Civil Engineer with at least three (3) years relevant work experience in the implementation of infrastructure projects such as potable water supplies, communal irrigation projects, community facilities and feeder roads/bridges including the preparation of technical designs/ estimates and reports. Should know how to drive a motorcycle and possess a professional driver's license.
SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT ADVISOR (1) Duty Station: Iligan City	Should have a Bachelor's degree in applied social sciences, preferably in Nursing, Social Work, Public Health and Administration, Rural Sociology, or Community Development. A related MS degree will be an advantage. He/ she will have at least five (5) years with the provision of health services, community organising and/or rural development work in coordination with LGUs. Familiarity with the delivery of health services at the barangay level will be an advantage.
BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT SPECIALIST (1) Duty Station. Kidapawan City	Should have a Masters degree in business administration, economics, enterprise development or a closely related discipline. He/she will have at least three (3) years commercial experience of small businesses and be familiar with the preparation of financial projections and marketing plans. S/he must have a clear understanding of business principles and should have applied them to small and/or medium sized enterprises. Experience with successful cooperative business venture will be a distinct advantage.

The Specialists must be physically fit and prepared to undertake fieldwork throughout Central Mindanao. S/he must be fluent in English and highly proficient with Microsoft software

Only shortlisted applicants will be notified. Deadline for submission of applications is on 15 FEBRUARY 2006.

(Sgd.) GLYNN P. BAKER
European Co-Director

(Sgd.) OSCAR A. MAMA
National Project Director

An application letter, including a resumé detailing duties, responsibilities and relevant experience, and a copy of transcript of records should be submitted to:

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Our Dearly Beloved

EDUARDO SUNICO DIMAANO

now rests in the infinite warmth and embrace of our Lord.
He joined our Creator on the 3rd of February, 2006 at the age of 65.

His loving wife **CAROL**; children **WILLY & OPHINE, ANNA & ERWIN RAMOS, MALOU, TINA & ALEC CANCIO, RODEL & IRENE** (†) and **LALA**; grandchildren **GELIQUE, GINO, JANICE, ALYSSA, JOSHUA, GERARD, TRISHA, ELLA & JOHN**; sisters **ANGIE & NORA**; brothers **DAN, DANTE**, and **ROLLY** other relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at Solace I, Arlington Memorial Chapels, Araneta Ave., Quezon City.

Necrological Services will be on Thursday, February 9, 2006 at 7:30 p.m. at the Ascension Chapel, Good Shepherd Cathedral, Fairview.

Funeral Mass will be on Friday, February 10, 2006 at 8:00 a.m. at the Good Shepherd Cathedral, Fairview. Cremation will be at 11:30 a.m. Interment follows at the Good Shepherd Cathedral Ossuary Garden.

"...absent from the body to be present with the Lord" 2 Corinthians 5:8

Atty. Artemio Yap David

of the City of San Fernando, Pampanga

Passed away in the Grace of our Lord
on February 5, 2006 at the age of 87.

His bereaved wife **Natividad Cruz David** (†);
children **Benedict, Scholastica, Edgar Joseph,**
Artemio Virgilio and **Regina Patricia**;
son-in-law **Caesar Cororaton**, daughter-in-law **Anna Christina**;
grandchildren **Anna, Claire, & Agnes**;
brothers & sister; nieces & nephews; other relatives & friends,
request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His body lies in state at The Good Shepherd Memorial Chapel,
City of San Fernando, Pampanga.

Interment will be on Saturday, February 11, 2006,
at 9:00 A.M.

Rev. Msgr. MICHAEL ALEXANDER E. BALARIA

Pastor of the Mother of Perpetual Help Parish
of the Diocese of Cabanatuan

peacefully joined our Lord
on February 3, 2006
at the age of 50.

His remains now lie in state at the Mother of Perpetual Help Parish Church (*Dambana*) in Cabanatuan City. Interment will be tomorrow morning, February 8, after the 9 AM Funeral Mass at the Crypt of the New Cathedral in Lakewood City, Cabanatuan City.

The Bishop, Clergy and Faithful of Cabanatuan, and his mother, Norma, his brothers and sisters Avelino, Cleotilde, Felipe, Ferdinand, Renato and Neil, request his relatives, friends, parishioners and pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

Requiescat in pace!

In lieu of flowers, friends may send donations to the
Msgr. Michael E. Balaria Scholarship Fund through the Parish Office

Our Dearly Beloved Papa

Engr. Jose N. Go, Jr.

Peacefully joined our Lord
and his wife Delia on
February 5, 2006 at the age of 54.

His children **Derick & Vanessa Broas**,
Nelson & Nicole Tamondong,
Marianela Go & Ryan Joseph Go; grandchildren
Alexiss and **Joey**; brothers
and sisters, request the pious readers to pray
for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at Premier 1, Loyola
Memorial Chapels, Guadalupe, Makati City.

Interment will be on Saturday,
February 11, 2006 at the Loyola
Memorial Park – Parañaque City after
the 11:00 a.m. mass at the Loyola Memorial
Chapels, Guadalupe, Makati City

More Classified Ads on pages A8 & A9

BUSINESS

Peso hits over 3-yr high

Food exports reach $1.07B

By Ronnel W. Domingo

FOOD EXPORTS REACHED ABOUT $1.07 billion from January to November 2005, a slight 5.9-percent rise from about $1 billion recorded in the same period in 2004, said the Department of Trade and Industry.

To sustain the growth, Trade Undersecretary Thomas G. Aquino said local food exporters needed to comply with new labeling requirements, which provide that product labels must indicate trans fat and allergen contents before these could be sold in the United States market.

Starting Jan. 1, the US Food and Drug Administration implemented the Food Allergen Labeling Consumer Protection Act as part of efforts to encourage healthy eating habits.

The law requires the identification in plain English, rather than by technical names, of the presence of any of the eight major food allergens on food labels.

However, Aquino said exporters could still send their shipments to the US, provided they use stickers that indicate the necessary details to supplement the old food labels.

The eight major food allergens that should be identified in the labels are milk; egg; fish like bass, flounder, and cod; crustaceans like crabs, lobster, and shrimps;, tree nuts like almonds, pecans, and walnuts; wheat; peanuts; and soybeans.

"We do not want our food exporters to be caught off guard, having no idea why their shipments are being embargoed," Aquino said.

Confidence boosts currency

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE PESO CONTINUED ITS RALLY AGAINST the US dollar yesterday and closed at 51.605, its strongest finish since August 2002.

Currency dealers said the currency strengthened on robust stock market inflows and upbeat sentiment on the government's fiscal reforms.

The peso gained over 2.3 percent over the last two weeks.

Marcelo Ayes, chief foreign exchange dealer at Equitable PCI Bank, predicted that the peso would continue its ascent and even break into the 49-50 level to the greenback later this year, if the government's cash budget position remained on track.

The currency's rally this year has been fueled largely by improvements in reining in the fiscal deficit.

Expectations that this month's increase in the sales tax will fetch the government higher revenues, and raise the chances for an upgrade in the country's rating, have also buoyed the currency.

The peso opened yesterday at 51.80, hit a high of 51.71 in morning trade and further gained ground in the afternoon, even as the US dollar firmed up against major global currencies like the Japanese yen, euro, British pound and Swiss franc.

The local currency gained 30.5 centavos from Friday's finish of 51.91 to the greenback.

Some $635.5 million changed hands at the Philippine Dealing System.

Pilmico to invest ₱150M more

By Christine A. Gaylican

PILMICO FOODS CORP., A SUBSIDIARY OF the Aboitiz Equity Ventures Inc., plans to invest at least P150 million this year in the expansion of its sow breeder production line.

This is in anticipation of a slight growth in sales this year, which will require the expansion of Pilmico's swine breeding operations in barangays Aranguren and Cut-Cut in Capas, Tarlac, Fil-Am Foods president Antonio Moraza said in an interview with the INQUIRER.

"We spent about P300 million over the last three years and will probably spend another P150 million this year for some expansion and facility upgrading," Moraza said.

Moraza said the additional investment should make its facilities more cost efficient, given the high cost of feeds.

The Aboitiz Group, through Pilmico Foods Corp., now owns 100 percent of Fil-Am Foods, after acquiring the shares of American partners, PM Nutrition Co. Inc. and Tyson Foods Inc. in 2003.

Fil-Am Foods' feeds manufacturing plant in Capas, Tarlac and in Iligan City are fully automated and thus, could produce better quality feeds at low operating costs, Moraza explained.

After only six years in the Philippine feeds market, PMI Nutrition—the brand name carried by Fil-Am Foods products—has been recognized by both commercial and backyard animal raisers in the country.

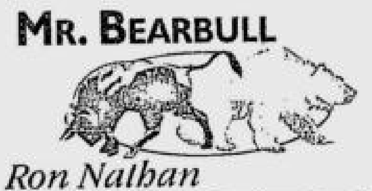
The company is more aggressive in cornering a niche in the hog sector.

The company competes with San Miguel Foods Corp.'s BMEG Feeds and Cargill Philippines Inc.'s Purina Feeds.

According to the 2004 annual report of the AEV Group, Pilmico posted a 109-percent increase in income contribution to AEV, equivalent to P361 million in profits.

How to be a better investor II

MR. BEARBULL



Ron Nathan

IF YOU FOLLOWED THE ADVICE contained in the first two articles, you should have improved your performance without VIAGRA. Here are few more tips to help you on your way.

Long term investment myth

This applies not only to the stock market but also to virtually everything that moves in cycles.

Using a chart breakout in 1980, I bought gold at $425 an ounce and sold it 17 days later at $800. If you had bought gold then, you would have watched it fall 70 percent over a period of 20 years before it recovered. Even now, 25 years later, it is still down $230, so timing is critical.

Take a look at the Phisix.

Back on Jan. 9, 1997, it was 3,420, and it is still 1,300 points lower nine years later. During that period, the Phisix has been changed four times, and this year, five poor-performing stocks were removed and replaced by five larger and better quality companies.

Yet, it is still down about 37 percent. And this does not take into account 9 years of inflation.

If you calculate it in dollar terms, the results are truly terrifying. MERB, a leading index stock, stood at P157 or $6 a share, at the rate of exchange then prevailing. The current price of P20.25 at today's dollar rate is about 38 centavos.

Take a look at the Nikkei.

Back in 1990, the index reached 39,500. Not so long ago, it was down to 8,000. Now that Japan appears to be recovering from a long recession, the Nikkei is 16,700 but it is still down 57 percent from 15 years ago.

Or look at the crazy prices that the US tech stocks reached in the year 2,000. They were selling on price/earnings ratios of 250 or more. Some of these stocks became worthless while many others fell up to 95 percent as the bubble burst.

No, long-term investing is not the answer. As the great economist Keynes said, "In the long-term, we are all dead." Timing is everything, and that is why you MUST learn technical analysis.

Do not overtrade

This does not apply as much as it did nine years ago when turnover was four times higher than it is now. In those days, the virtual rumor factory in Binondo was selling BW to its gullible clients.

The same people are now selling memorial plots to their former sick and depressed clients. After the BW debacle, public confidence in the stock market waned. One poor lady emailed me that she had paid P104 on the advice of her stockbroker and the stock had fallen to 70 centavos.

She asked if she would ever see her money back and I replied somewhat unkindly, "Only if you believe in reincarnation." The market is now more transparent and I am pleased to see that the PSE is now organizing seminars to woo back the small investor.

Trading costs are very high. Two commissions plus VAT, sales tax, and the spread adds up to around 3 percent. On such odds, casinos become immensely rich so if you have those odds stacked against you, you will not make money trading everyday, unless you are a genius.

I am not, so I have trained myself to be patient and stay out of the market for days, weeks, even months. Patience is a virtue, which you must cultivate. When the trend is down, do what the hedgehog does and go into hibernation.

Do not trade on tips

In England, we have a saying. "Where there's a tip, there is tap." In American, that is a faucet but it doesn't sound right so I won't faucet upon you. Anyway, this is pretty well covered by the previous rule.

Buy low priced shares

This does not mean that you should rush to buy low-priced third liners, which do not have any assets and have never made a profit. But occasionally, you might hit the jackpot and we have seen the price of WEB triple in less than two weeks.

This could not possibly happen to a heavyweight such as TEL. Look for shares in the P1 to P5 range as they are more volatile but remember that volatility is a double-edged sword.

Learn technical analysis

Sadly, there are no courses in this country to teach it and I am much too old and feeble to consider it. There is a Society of Technical Analysts, but it has been dormant for years. Still, there are various things you can do.

You can buy books on the subject at good bookstore, but they are imported and cost around P3,000.

The best author is John Murphy because he writes so simply so that beginners can understand it. Martin Pring writes in a very complex manner suitable only for those with advanced knowledge of the subject.

You can subscribe to PINOYFINANCE (formerly TECHNISTOCK) for P800 a month and you will get on-line quotes in the morning, charts with 4 indicators and access to lots of fundamental data. You can obtain some of this free from YEHEY FINANCE.com. You can also get an introduction to technical analysis plus weekly charts from tsupitero.com and they also sell second hand books.

I have a technical analysis newsletter but it is at the top end of the market. It is not free, it is designed for traders with at least P500,000 and they must understand terms such as price/earnings ratios and stock dividends. Subscriptions are kept down to a manageable two-digit figure so that it remains personal.

Occasionally, slots become available.

Then there is the Internet, which has a vast amount of information, but you need to search accurately. Typing in technical analysis will probably result in millions of sites so be specific. I remember inserting Point and Figure into the search engine, instead of Point and Figure charts. The computer provided me with numerous articles on charts and an equal number on women with beautiful pointed figures.

If you have a computer, buy METSTOCK. The latest version is $299, but you can pickup older versions far, far cheaper. It is purely for technical analysis and gives about 100 indicators, which you can adjust for the Philippine markets. This means changing the defaults because our market is much smaller and exhibits different characteristics. The problem is getting the data that is provided at 12:30 p.m. by the PSE. You need the help of your broker.

If you do not have a computer, you can make your own Point and Figure charts but first, you must gather the data from a public library or the research department of the PSE. This is very tedious but you only have to do it once.

The total cost of a math book and a pencil is P50. Once you have plotted the data, you can cover the Phisix in 10 minutes a day and it is very easy to analyze. I have been using this system since 1970 in the London stock market and strongly recommend it to students.

I hope that this series of three articles will prove useful to readers. *mrbearbull@hotmail.com*

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PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of February 6, 2006)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
FINANCIAL					
BANKS					
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	36.5	36.5	36	36.5	52,800
Bank of the Phil. Islands	58	58.5	58	58	604,900
China Banking Corp.	605	605	605	605	1,650
Citystate Savings Bank	19	19	19	19	300
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	61.5	61.5	61.5	61.5	11,600
International Exch. Bank	21.25	21.75	21.25	21.75	153,200
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	32	32.5	31	32.5	824,700
Philippine National Bank	31.5	31.5	31	31	10,700
Security Bank Corp.	38	38	38	38	15,300
Union Bank of the Phil.	35.5	35.5	35	35	12,300
OTHER FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS					
Bankard Inc.	0.72	0.72	0.72	0.72	20,000
Manulife Financial Corp.	3135	3135	3135	3135	70
PCI Leasing & Fin. Inc.	1.02	1.02	1.02	1.02	195,000
Phil. Stock Exchange Inc.	145	145	145	145	100
Ivantage Corp.	0.66	0.67	0.66	0.67	1,790,000
INDUSTRIAL					
ELECTRICITY, ENERGY, POWER & WATER					
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	47.5	48	47.5	48	235,700
Manila Electric Co. A	13.75	13.75	13.75	13.75	3,700
Manila Electric Co. B	20.5	20.5	20.25	20.25	510,500
Manila Water Co. Inc.	6.4	6.4	6.3	6.4	893,000
Petron Corp.	4.7	4.7	4.6	4.6	3,417,000
FOOD, BEVERAGE & TOBACCO					
Alaska Milk Corp.	3.6	3.6	3.6	3.6	6,000
Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	23	23	23	23	3,400
Jollibee Foods Corp.	37.5	37.5	36.5	37.5	246,800
Pancake House Inc.	3.6	3.6	3.6	3.6	50,000
RFM Corp.	0.69	0.69	0.69	0.69	50,000
Roxas Holdings Inc.	1.72	1.72	1.72	1.72	103,000
Swift Food Inc.	0.2	0.21	0.2	0.2	440,000
San Miguel Corp. A	62.5	62.5	62	62.5	93,400
San Miguel Corp. B	84.5	85.5	84.5	85.5	40,800
Universal Robina Corp.	18.5	18.5	18.5	18.5	94,900
Vitarich Corp	0.29	0.29	0.29	0.29	200,000
CONSTRUCTION, INFRASTRUCTURE & ALLIED SERVICES					
Southeast Asian Cement	0.36	0.36	0.34	0.36	520,000
Engineering Equip. Inc.	1.16	1.18	1.14	1.16	1,623,000
Holcim Philippines Inc.	4.35	4.4	4.35	4.4	100,000
CHEMICALS					
Interphil Labs Inc. A	0.72	0.72	0.72	0.72	20,000
Metro Alliance Hldgs B	0.39	0.4	0.39	0.4	250,000
Mabuhay Vinyl Corp.	0.76	0.76	0.76	0.76	30,000
DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIALS					
Global Equities Inc.	0.0725	0.075	0.0725	0.075	5,200,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Abacus Con Res & Hdg A	0.009	0.009	0.009	0.009	14,000,000
Abacus Con Res & Hdg B	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	5,000,000
Ayala Corp.	337.5	337.5	330	332.5	38,590
Alsons Cons. Res. Inc.	0.51	0.51	0.51	0.51	100,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	4.85	4.9	4.8	4.8	797,000
Ajo.Net Holdings Inc.	0.024	0.024	0.023	0.023	39,500,000
A. Soriano Corp.	2.24	2.24	2.24	2.24	250,000
APC Group Inc.	0.22	0.22	0.22	0.22	280,000
Alcorn Gold Res. Corp.	0.0075	0.0075	0.007	0.007	16,000,000
Anglo Phil Holdings Corp.	0.87	0.87	0.87	0.87	110,000
ATN Holdings Inc.	1.8	1.8	1.8	1.8	17,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	1.06	1.06	1.02	1.02	13,998,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	3.2	3.2	3.1	3.15	317,000
Filinvest Dev. Corp.	1.26	1.26	1.26	1.26	2,000
House Of Investments Inc.	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.2	100,000
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	4.4	4.4	4.35	4.35	749,000
Prime Orion Phils. Inc.	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	3,840,000
Sinophil Corp.	0.135	0.135	0.135	0.135	120,000
SM Investments Corp.	228	229	225	225	85,020
South China Resources Inc.	0.81	0.81	0.81	0.81	20,000
Unioil Res. & Holdings Co	0.065	0.065	0.065	0.065	200,000
Wellex Industries Inc.	0.125	0.15	0.125	0.15	9,970,000
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	11.25	11.25	11	11	6,436,200
Araneta Properties Inc.	0.32	0.32	0.32	0.32	50,000
Belle Corp.	1.04	1.06	1.04	1.04	608,000
A Brown Company Inc.	0.99	0.99	0.99	0.99	60,000
Crown Equities Inc.	0.21	0.225	0.205	0.22	8,710,000
Cebu Holdings Inc	1.54	1.54	1.48	1.52	872,000
C & P Homes Inc	1.8	1.8	1.8	1.8	72,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.215	0.22	0.215	0.22	300,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.47	0.48	0.47	0.48	1,780,000
Ever-Gotesco Resources	0.025	0.025	0.025	0.025	500,000
Filinvest Land Inc	1.54	1.54	1.5	1.5	1,069,000
Interport Res.	0.0044	0.0044	0.0044	0.0044	1,000,000
Interport Res. B	0.004	0.004	0.004	0.004	1,000,000
Kuok Phil. Properties	0.205	0.205	0.205	0.205	380,000
Fil-Estate Land Inc.	0.48	0.48	0.48	0.48	210,000
Megaworld Corp.	1.46	1.48	1.46	1.46	3,222,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.34	0.35	0.34	0.35	10,810,000
Robinsons Land Corp.	6.1	6.2	6.1	6.1	216,000
Phil Realty and Holdings	0.14	0.14	0.14	0.14	3,240,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	8.2	8.4	8.2	8.3	8,971,000
Uniwide Holdings Inc	0.135	0.135	0.13	0.13	720,000
SERVICE					
MEDIA					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	12	12	11.75	12	42,800
TELECOMMUNICATIONS					
Digital Telecom Phils Inc.	0.9	0.91	0.89	0.9	3,110,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	755	765	755	760	23,750
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	3.35	3.4	3.35	3.4	231,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	1850	1850	1845	1845	23,640
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY					
Imperial Res.	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	500,000
Ionics Inc.	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.2	33,000
ISM Communications Corp.	0.055	0.0575	0.055	0.0575	21,200,000
Philweb Corp	0.03	0.031	0.028	0.029	498,200,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Asian Terminals Inc.	2	2	1.92	2	23,000
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	11.75	11.75	11.5	11.75	330,200
Keppel Phils. Marine Inc	0.71	0.71	0.71	0.71	600,000
Lorenzo Shipping Corp.	1.26	1.3	1.26	1.3	5,000
HOTEL & LEISURE					
Leisure & Resorts Corp.	1.7	1.7	1.68	1.7	525,000
Philippine Racing Club	3.15	3.15	3.1	3.1	16,000
Waterfront Phils. Inc	0.36	0.43	0.36	0.43	8,340,000
EDUCATION					
Far Eastern University	580	580	580	580	5,520
Ipeople Inc.	3.2	3.2	3.15	3.2	142,000
DIVERSIFIED SERVICES					
Jardine Davies Inc.	22	22	22	22	1,000
Macroasia Corp.	1.3	1.34	1.3	1.34	307,000
Paxys Inc	7.7	7.7	7.6	7.6	325,000
MINING					
Apex Mining Co. Inc. A	1.18	1.18	1.12	1.16	312,000
Apex Mining Co. Inc. B	1.56	1.56	1.5	1.5	2,000
Abra Mining & Industrial	0.007	0.007	0.007	0.007	3,000,000
Atlas Cons. Min & Dev't	6	6.2	6	6	523,000
Benguet Corp. A	6.8	6.8	6.8	6.8	7,000
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.225	0.225	0.22	0.22	2,690,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co. B	0.26	0.26	0.25	0.26	2,050,000
Manila Mining Corp. A	0.016	0.016	0.016	0.016	27,300,000
Manila Mining Corp. B	0.024	0.024	0.023	0.023	43,500,000
Omico Corp.	0.0055	0.006	0.0055	0.006	4,000,000
Philex Mining Corp. A	1.8	1.8	1.74	1.74	8,797,000
Philex Mining Corp. B	2.06	2.14	2.06	2.1	7,258,000
Semirara Mining Corp.	26	26.5	26	26.5	194,100
United Paragon Mining Co.	0.26	0.26	0.26	0.26	50,000
Vulcan Ind'l	0.36	0.36	0.36	0.36	40,000
OIL					
Basic Consolidated Inc.	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	380,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.008	0.008	0.008	0.008	30,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. B	0.009	0.009	0.009	0.009	25,000,000
The Philodrill Corp. A	0.43	0.43	0.43	0.43	430,000
The Philodrill Corp. B	0.47	0.47	0.47	0.47	20,000
Petroenergy Res. Corp.	4.2	4.2	4.2	4.2	3,000
PREFERRED					
PLDT (10% Pref.) Series U	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	800
PLDT 10% Pref Series AA	10.75	10.75	10.75	10.75	100
WARRANTS, PHIL. DEPOSIT RECEIPTS, ETC.					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp. (PDR)	11.75	11.75	11.5	11.5	506,800

CURRENCIES

February 6, 2006 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.831532	1.000000	51.9490
Japan	Yen	0.006997	0.008415	0.4372
United Kingdom	Pound	1.465907	1.762900	91.5809
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.107202	0.128921	6.6973
Switzerland	Franc	0.642357	0.772499	40.1306
Canada	Dollar	0.726102	0.873210	45.3624
Singapore	Dollar	0.508956	0.612070	31.7964
Australia	Dollar	0.622824	0.749008	38.9102
Bahrain	Dinar*	2.206181	2.653153	137.8286
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.221742	0.266667	13.8531
Brunei	Dollar	0.507403	0.610203	31.6994
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000090	0.000108	0.0056
Thailand	Baht	0.021132	0.025413	1.3202
UAE	Dirham	0.226396	0.272264	14.1438
Euro	Euro	1.000000	1.202600	62.4739
Argentina	Peso	0.271299	0.326264	16.9491
Brazil	Real	0.376514	0.452796	23.5223
Denmark	Kroner	0.133961	0.161101	8.3690
India	Rupee	0.018864	0.022686	1.1785
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.222156	0.267165	13.8790
Mexico	New Peso	0.079277	0.095338	4.9527
New Zealand	Dollar	0.571695	0.687521	35.7160
Norway	Kroner	0.124453	0.149667	7.7751
Pakistan	Rupee	0.013892	0.016706	0.8679
South Africa	Rand	0.137248	0.165055	8.5744
Korea	Won	0.000857	0.001031	0.0536
Sweden	Kroner	0.107874	0.129729	6.7393
Syria	Pound	0.016019	0.019264	1.0007
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.025950	0.031207	1.6212
Venezuela	Bolivar	0.000387	0.000466	0.0242

READERS' FAQs
/C3

LIFESTYLE

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Editor **Chelo Banal-Formoso**

MONDAY **ARTS & BOOKS** ◎ TUESDAY **FITNESS** ◎ WEDNESDAY **2BU** ◎ THURSDAY **FOOD** ◎ FRIDAY **FASHION & BEAUTY**

Spirituality affects physical health

WELL AND GOOD

Tina Juan

THE WORLD'S BEST doctor and healer is none other than you! Every person possesses an innate healing force. Good health is our natural birthright, and the power to be in good health and to enjoy life to the full lies within us. "More effective than any pill or scientific advancement is the understanding of the power of knowledge, faith, love and action. Holistic health care means taking full responsibility of your whole being."

These lines are from the first chapter of "A Gift of Health" by Mariandy A. Fricke. I spent a lovely afternoon with her a few weeks ago chatting about the principles that have guided her work in the field of holistic wellness for more than 12 years.

Her book, launched recently, is a compilation of her holistic health studies and practices that go way back to 1994 when she opened Andyways Holistic Health Center in BF Homes, Parañaque.

Since then she has gotten a master's degree in Education Guidance and Counseling and taken further studies in Social Education and Holistic Health Consultancy.

Law of nature

She defines holistic health as a law of nature, the whole is made up of interdependent parts. She writes, "The earth is made up of different systems like air, land, water, plants and animals. In order to sustain life, these cannot be separated because what happens to one system has an effect on the rest.

"Similarly, an individual is a whole made up of interdependent parts: physical, mental + emotional = spirituality, and chemical. When one part is not working perfectly, the others are affected. In addition, you, as a whole person, are in constant interaction with your environment. Which is why one can have a migraine or an upset stomach due to anxiety over a job interview."

Many people have written about the importance of exercise, nutrition ("chemical" is her term for nutrition) and stress management to physical health. But Andy also talks about how spirituality (or lack of it) can affect your health.

She explains, "Being spiritually healthy means being intimately connected with your spouse, partner, family, friends, and community—a connection that gives you innate joy and satisfaction. Through a harmonious relationship with people in your life, you learn to give and receive unconditional love."

Guilt is unhealthy

And philandering husbands, be careful. Your extracurricular activities could be the source of your health problems. Andy writes, "A mind filled with guilt, fear or negative feelings is disturbed and can affect all the physiological and biological processes of the body.

"For example, a married man engaged in an illicit affair learns to hide things from his wife and family. The fear of being caught haunts him and brings about negative stress on the body.

"Fear metabolizes the bodily acids that can lower the immune system. Exposure to such constant stress will take its toll on the body, while living a clean and righteous life helps the body processes work smoothly, helping it heal on its own."

Andy points out that self-centeredness and egoism can lead to daily stress and constant state of "fight or flight" because of the obsession to protect one's selfish interests.

She says, "What usually disrupts our 'feel-good' state is discord among family members, friends or colleagues. Conflict brings chaos and loads of negative feelings that may have psychosomatic manifestations."

Scientific proof

Preliminary scientific research has validated Andy's belief that physical health is affected by spiritual health. According to the Harvard Women's Health Watch, mentally nursing a grudge makes your muscles tense and your blood pressure rise. Meanwhile, a study found that people who forgave those who betrayed them experienced improvements in blood pressure and heart rate and decreased workload for the heart.

Another study suggests that people with vengeful personalities and a chronic desire to retaliate might have a higher risk of dying early due to cardiovascular problems.

In her book, Andy lists some "exercises" to improve your "spiritual fitness":

"Find time to think about all the things you have to be grateful for in life. Being grateful to God for what you have, instead of worrying about what you lack, enables you to let go of negative thoughts and attitudes.

"People who pray report a greater sense of well-being than those who do not. Choose the form of prayer that you feel comfortable with then establish a schedule for daily prayer. If you are a Christian, pray the 'Our Father' the moment you wake up. Saying this prayer dislodges negative feelings because your mind is focused on a powerful source and not just on your problems.

"Another practice that radiates energy is blessing people—even those you do not know. When you meet someone who looks downcast, just say silently, 'I bless you for the goodness of God that is working with you and in you.' Your blessing will help his day and lighten his load."

Note: "A Gift of Health" is available at National Bookstore and Powerbooks. Call 8070402. E-mail mariandyf55@yahoo.com.

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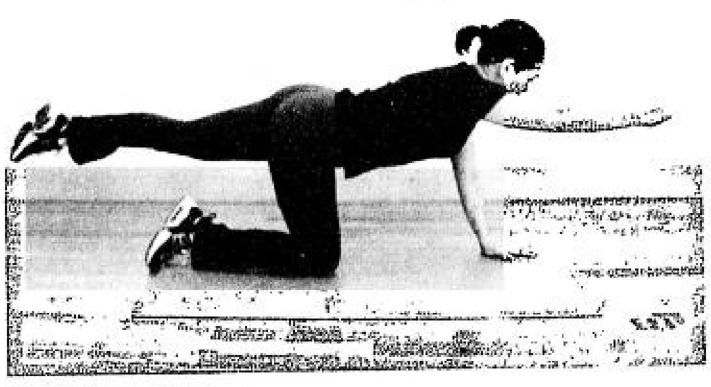
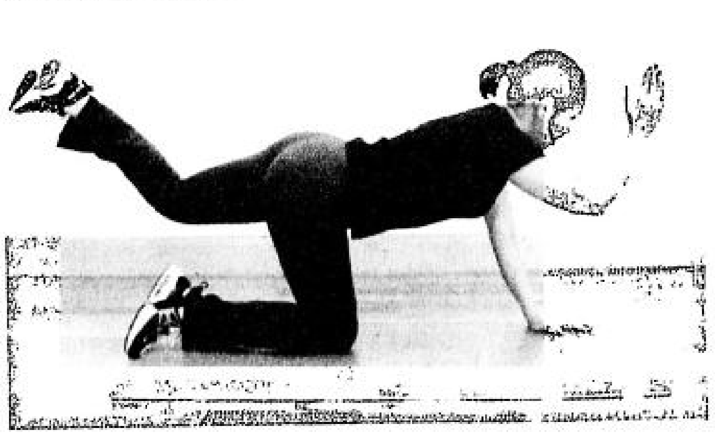
EXERCISE OF THE WEEK

Balanced hamstring curl





STRENGTHENS THE buttocks, back of the thighs (hamstrings) and back of the shoulders (rear deltoids). The abdominal and lower back muscles are also strengthened as stabilizers. This is also a good exercise for balance.

Equipment:

Exercise mat

Exercise technique:

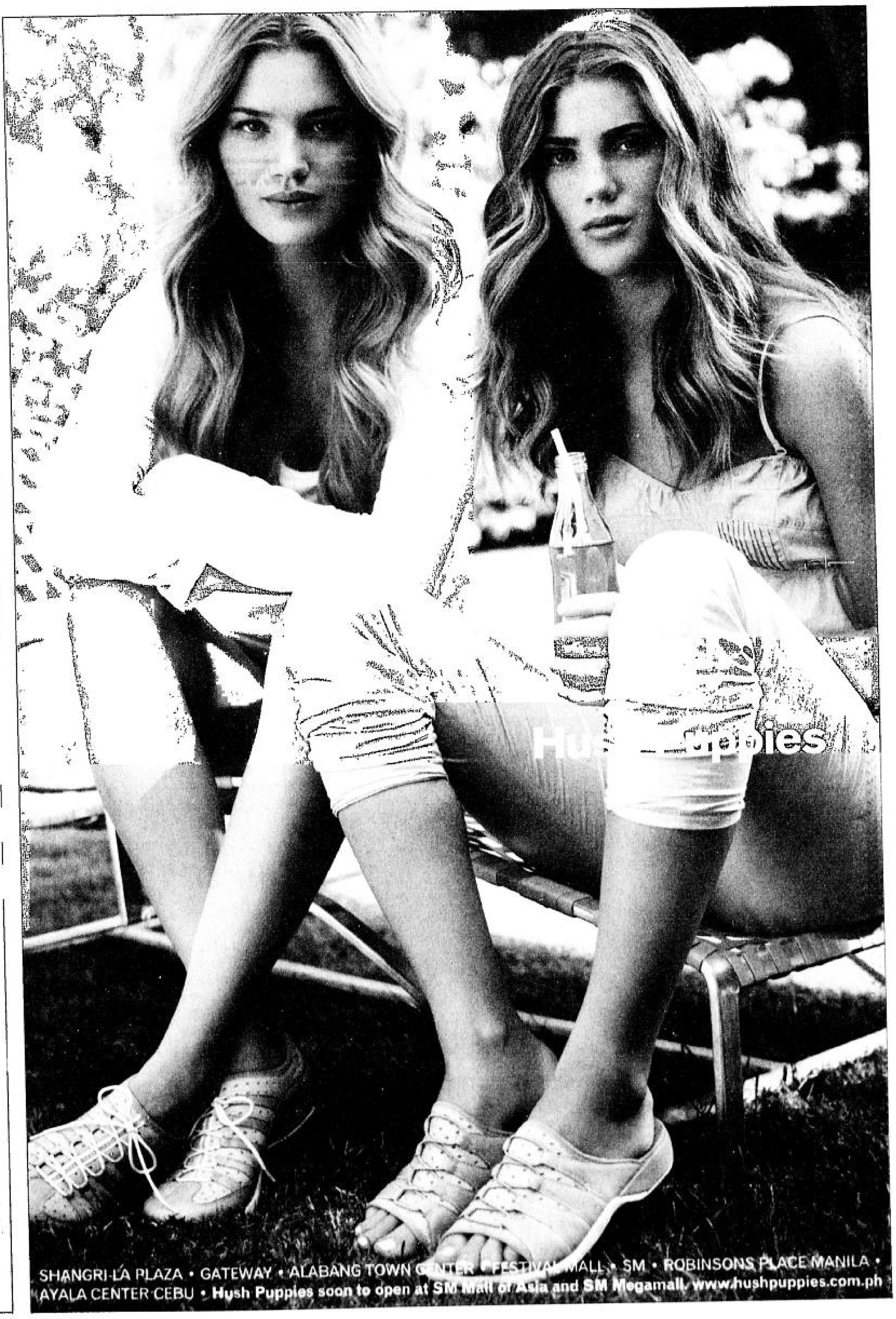
1. Kneel on hands and knees.
2. Knees should be directly under hips, and arms directly under shoulder joint. Keep your legs slightly apart for balance.
3. Keep your abdominal and lower back muscles tight throughout the exercise.
4. Your head should be kept in line with your spine. Do not allow the head to hang down or the neck to arch up.
5. Lift and straighten the opposite arm and leg (example: right arm and left leg). Hold the arm and leg at hip level. Bend your knee and elbow. Straighten again.
6. Repeat the bending and straightening 12 times before switching to the other side. This makes one set.

Performance tips:

1. Make sure both shoulders and hips are facing the floor throughout the exercise. Avoid leaning to one side.
2. Imagine a stick balanced along your spine—do not let it fall.
3. Keep squeezing your buttocks to keep your leg held at hip level.

Repetitions:

Do one set of 12 repetitions on each side.



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Filipino women's hidden pain

INNER AWARENESS

Jaime T. Licauco

(Part I)

OVER THE PAST 15 YEARS, A NUMBER of women have come to me for advice on all sorts of problems.

However, I observed that no matter what their educational attainment or social status was, they had only three main concerns. The first was relationships; the second, relationships; and the third, relationships! Other problems paled in comparison to these three.

Although it may be true that, under Philippine laws, Filipino women are accorded the same rights and opportunities as men, unlike those in some Asian countries, they privately suffer deep-seated emotional pain because of the machismo mentality and double standard of morality of the average Filipino man.

Double standard

A brilliant German atomic energy scientist who had worked as consultant in the Philippines told me, "I have observed that, in your country, the women are not given much freedom to relate with other individuals, especially with the opposite sex, after they are married, yet this is not the case with your men. They can go out with whomever they want."

Patricia (not her real name) was an attractive and highly intelligent 35-year-old manager of a large financial organization in Metro Manila. She had two lovely daughters. Ever since she got married 10 years ago, she had never gone out, even in a group, with other people except with close relations.

Her businessman husband was so possessive and jealous he would not even let her stay out of the house after 6 p.m. She was expected to be at home to attend to her family after office hours. If she came home later than 6 p.m. she had to account for her whereabouts, otherwise there would be a big discussion with her husband, which she would rather avoid.

Throughout her married life, Pat had accepted this state of affairs without complaint. She did whatever her husband wanted her to do without question. Although she appeared to others to be a happily married woman, she was suffering silently though she would not admit this to herself. She was constantly in denial.

Silent rebellion

Without her realizing it, Pat's physical body was silently rebelling against this unhealthy and neurotic relationship. For one thing, she never enjoyed sex with her husband. She did it only out of a sense of marital duty. She never experienced orgasm like normal women. She was a virgin when she got married and had never had any sexual experience with another man beyond kissing.

Although her body ached for that ultimate feminine pleasure, her mind had learned to suppress it. Soon she developed "endometriosis," a painful ailment where uterine tissues, for yet unknown reasons, escaped from the uterus and landed in other areas, such as the ovaries and elsewhere.

But there was one area in Pat's body that neither her husband nor society could control—her imagination! And this was where Pat expressed her real and natural feminine self. When we had become close friends, I asked Pat what her wildest sexual fantasies were. What she described to me, between giggles, would make Xaviera Hollander, Linda Lovelace and Margie Holmes look like convent nuns!

Not so free

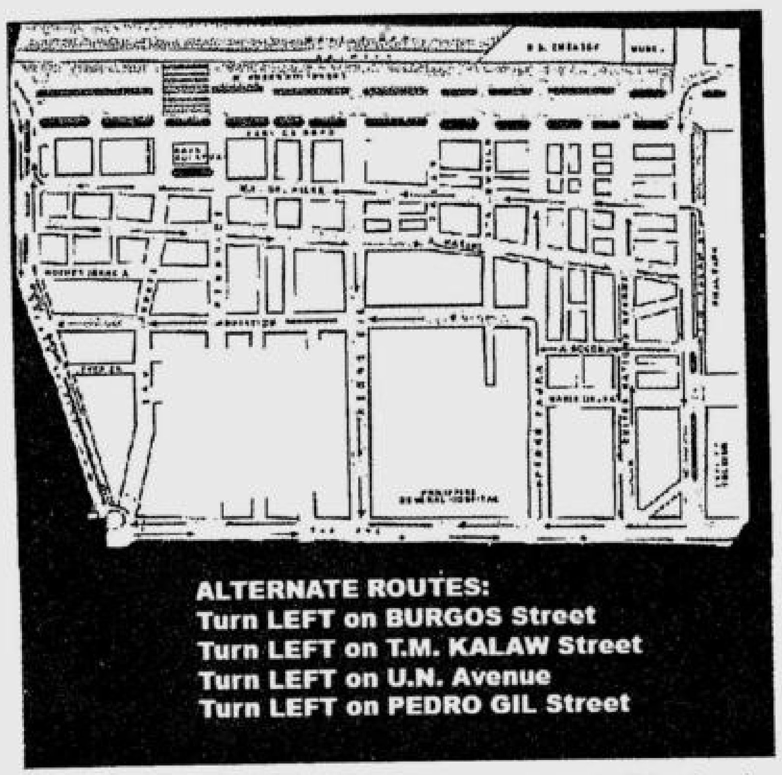
The case of Patricia may be a bit extreme, given the more liberal social climate we now have in modern-day Philippines, but it is not really far from the experience of most Filipino women. They are still not so free to socialize with whomever they want, especially the opposite sex. Society always assumes something immoral is going on if they do that.

This is quite a contrast to what I witnessed in Europe, which made me realize the pathological or neurotic nature of most marital relationships we have in this country. Let me relate this incredible story from the beginning.

In 1979, I met in Manila a 45-year-old German nuclear scientist whom we shall call Rudolf, and his beautiful 35-year-old French partner named Michelle, who had an 8-year-old son by a previous marriage. They lived in Grenoble, South of France. Rudolf sought me out because he had read a pamphlet I had written about Philippine healers. Michelle had a cyst in the breast that she didn't want to be operated on through conventional means. I introduced them to several psychic healers, but her treatment was not completed because Rudolf had to go back to France.

Note: Pampanga residents interested in "Soulmates, Karma and Reincarnation" seminar to be held Feb. 11 at Mimosa, Clarkfield, Angeles City, contact Riza Lim at 0917-8436043.

Traffic rerouted for annual love fest



ALTERNATE ROUTES:
Turn LEFT on BURGOS Street
Turn LEFT on T.M. KALAW Street
Turn LEFT on U.N. Avenue
Turn LEFT on PEDRO GIL Street

ON FEB. 11, the northbound lane of Roxas Boulevard will be closed at 9 a.m., while the southbound lane will be closed by 5 p.m.

CLOSEUP LOVAPALOOZA 2006, the country's biggest and grandest Valentine celebration, will be held simultaneously Feb. 11 in four venues—Roxas Boulevard Baywalk, Manila; Bayanihan Park, MacArthur Highway, Angeles City, Pampanga; FGU Ayala Business Park, Cebu; and Matina Town Square, Davao.

CloseUp brand manager Anna Fernandez said they expected this year's Lovapalooza to be grander, more romantic, and more exciting.

To ensure the safety and comfort of participants, CloseUp is doubling its security task force, adding to some 2,000 personnel from the Philippine National Police and the City of Manila with the help of Mayor Lito Atienza.

Security sweeps by Special Weapons and Tactics team will be conducted. Bouncers and plainclothes security personnel will also patrol the area to prevent any untoward occurrence.

Paramedics, ambulances and fire trucks will be on standby and an emergency security desk will be set up at the Rajah Sulayman Park starting Feb 10.

On Feb. 11, the northbound lane of Roxas Boulevard will be closed at 9 a.m., while the southbound lane will be closed by 5 p.m.

Fernandez said Lovapalooza was a venue for people to enjoy, celebrate love, and have fun.

MAGICAL GREEN TEA
Fruit Magic has launched Magic Shots, a new way to enjoy the benefits of green tea. The new product from the United States comes in the form of liquid herbal vitamins made from green tea extracts. Alan Escalona, CEO of Fruit Magic, says this allows people to gain the benefits of Green Tea in its concentrated form. The new product comes in five blends: Energy, Fat Burner, Memory, Immunity, and Blood Sugar Management. Magic Shots is now available in all Fruit Magic stores nationwide. Call 3646927, 3643621, fax 3662934 or visit www.fruitmagic.com.ph.

Fundraiser for PGH patients

THE PHILIPPINE GENERAL HOSPITAL Medical Foundation Inc. (PGHMF) is holding the "Sining at Awit para sa PGH" charity event, Feb. 9, 6:30 p.m., at the Main Lounge of the Manila Polo Club.

The fund drive will support the foundation's efforts to provide free medicines and medical supplies to PGH indigent patients and its "Adopt a Charity Ward" project.

Highlight of the event is the auction of artworks by foremost Filipino artists including Napoleon Abueva, Augusto Albor, Manuel Baldemor, Lito Carating, Valeria Cavestany, Arturo Luz, Romulo Olazo (through the donation of Dr. Danny David), Juvenal Sanso, Nestor Vinluan and Phyllis Zaballero.

Hosting the event are Tim Yap and Cory Quirino. Musical numbers will be performed by Pinky Marquez, Ricky Davao, Ivy Violan, Bobby Soul, a string quartet with tenor Austine Caseñas, and soprano Jenny Garcia.

A silent auction will also be held for other items such as hotel accommodations in El Nido Resort, Palawan; Maribago Resort, Cebu; The Farm and Villa Escudero; round-trip tickets for two to Cebu; dinners for two at Prince Albert in Hotel InterCon, Nielsen's at Peninsula, and Tin Hau at Mandarin; as well as the latest designer gowns and others.

Spearheading the event are PGHMF president Dr. Greg Alvior, chair Lolita Escobar-Mirpuri, vice chair Jenny Zamora, and Cory Quirino, overall chair for the "Alay sa PGH" fund campaign.

The event is sponsored by American Express Card, Merck Sharp & Dohme, Zuellig Pharmaceuticals, Filipino Star Printing and BMW.

Call the PGHMF at 5362874 or 5218450 local 3061.

Pro-life training seminar Feb. 17

TWO INTERNATIONAL speakers are featured during the Pro-Life Philippines' Training Seminar on Feb. 17.

The seminar on "Post-Abortion Recovery & Healing" is part of the Pro-Life Month observance this February.

Molly White and Denise Mountenay are both involved in healing and counseling ministries for post-abortive women. White is executive director of Living the Redeemed Life Ministry-USA, while Mountenay is founder/president of Canada Silent No More.

MOLLY White

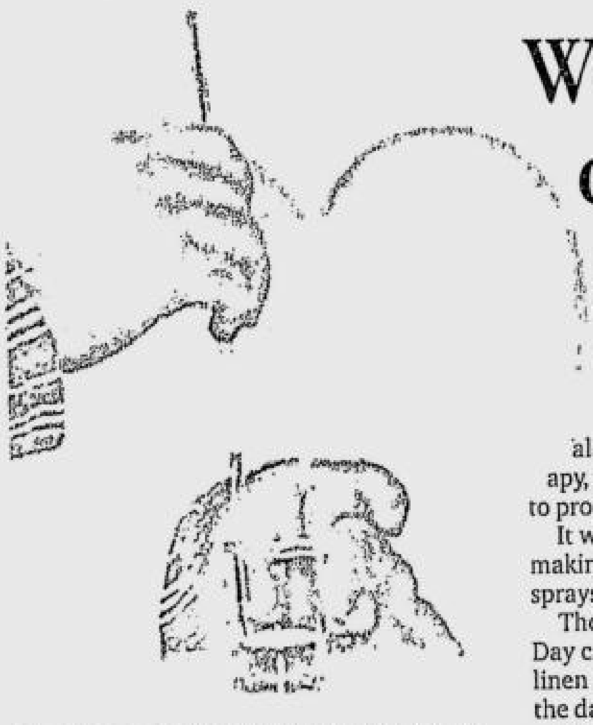
Other international guests are Karen Bodle, Michelle Sprawls and Luana Stoltenberg. They will talk about the issue of abortion and their own experiences.

Also lined up for Pro-Life Month are the 12th National Convention on Feb. 11, the Human Chain for Life and dialogue with pro-life congressmen on Feb. 15, launch of Nurses for Life (an organization of nurses and nursing students) on Feb. 16, and a prayer conference to combat the harmful effects of abortion on Feb. 18.

Pro-Life Philippines, a non-profit nationwide organization, offers programs and services that include pregnancy counseling centers, sectoral and grassroots organizing, intensive education and training programs such as Basic Pro-life Orientation Seminar, Teen Sexuality Training Workshop, Pro-life Lecture Series and the Pro-life Intensive Faculty Education (Pro-LIFE) Course.

Call 4217147 or 9112911. Visit www.prolife.org.ph.

Workshop on making of massage, essential oils



Blending essential oils for love and romance

SPA PROFESSIONALS IS HOLDING ITS first practical Make Your Own Aromatherapy Workshop on Feb. 11 at its training center along East Service Road in Sucat, Parañaque.

The workshop, designed for individuals and spa owners, will teach aromatherapy, the use of scents from natural products to promote health and beauty.

It will include a short lecture and hands-on making of facial products, massage oils, linen sprays, body scrubs and hair care products.

Those wanting a unique gift for Valentine's Day can learn to blend their own massage oil, linen spray or essential oil blend to liven up the day of hearts.

This will ensure the products they are giving away are free of artificial preservatives and colorings. The oils can be customized to suit the recipient's or the maker's own needs. Making them is also more fun and much cheaper.

The first workshop will focus on essential oils to celebrate love and romance.

Future workshops will be held on the second Saturday of every month. The courses will be conducted by a qualified pharmacist and aromatherapist and is offered in conjunction with Spa Essentials (www.spaessentials.com.ph).

Spa Professionals (www.spaprofessionals.net) is the only internationally accredited (CIBTAC) spa school in the Philippines. Call 8382167 or e-mail info@spaprofessionals.net.

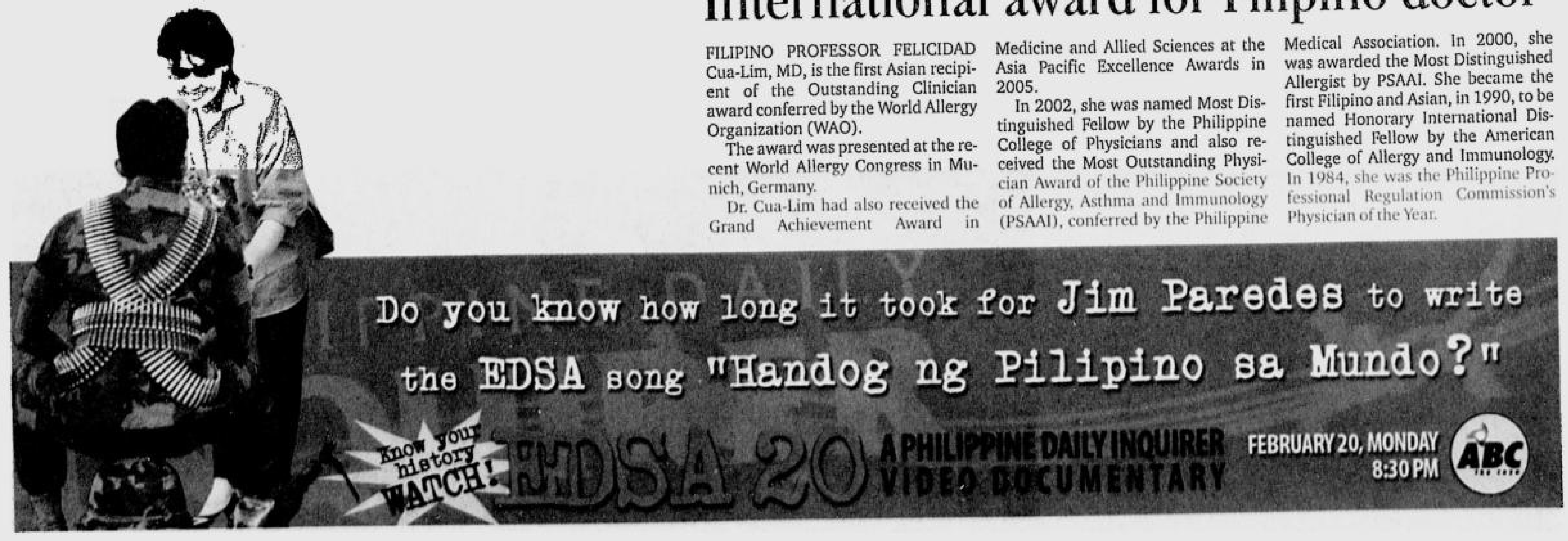
International award for Filipino doctor

FILIPINO PROFESSOR FELICIDAD Cua-Lim, MD, is the first Asian recipient of the Outstanding Clinician award conferred by the World Allergy Organization (WAO).

The award was presented at the recent World Allergy Congress in Munich, Germany.

Dr. Cua-Lim had also received the Grand Achievement Award in Medicine and Allied Sciences at the Asia Pacific Excellence Awards in 2005.

In 2002, she was named Most Distinguished Fellow by the Philippine College of Physicians and also received the Most Outstanding Physician Award of the Philippine Society of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology (PSAAI), conferred by the Philippine Medical Association. In 2000, she was awarded the Most Distinguished Allergist by PSAAI. She became the first Filipino and Asian, in 1990, to be named Honorary International Distinguished Fellow by the American College of Allergy and Immunology. In 1984, she was the Philippine Professional Regulation Commission's Physician of the Year.


Do you know how long it took for Jim Paredes to write the EDSA song "Handog ng Pilipino sa Mundo?"
Know your history WATCH!
EDSA 20
A PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER VIDEO DOCUMENTARY
FEBRUARY 20, MONDAY 8:30 PM
ABC

Answers to questions that matter most to you

INSIDE OUT
Cory Quirino

WE GIVE WAY TO frequently asked questions. Answers to your deepest concerns can lead to greater well-being.

Is chocolate bad for health and your waistline?

Chocolate is not bad at all. In fact, it has health benefits. David Benton, Ph.D., of the University of Wales-Swansea proved in a study that chocolate improved people's moods.

When given chocolate, the mood of depressed students improved. Apart from serotonin-stimulating sugar and fat that soothe the mind and release endorphins, chocolate contains chemicals, including phenylethylamine, that stimulate the central nervous system.

The good feeling created by chocolate may be the reason it is considered addictive. As with anything, moderation is the key. One can overdo the sweets and regret the effect on the waistline.

Can alcohol damage the brain?

Alcohol is a brain-buster if taken in excess. Heavy drinking of alcohol (10 or more drinks per week) can kill brain cells, eventually leading to brain atrophy, a decline in one's cognitive abilities and functions, and possibly dementia.

Even if one does not drink daily (but lingers once or twice weekly) it can overload the brain too soon, too much, too fast and eventually trigger strokes. Drunk in moderation (1 glass daily), alcohol does have an anti-inflammatory effect and boosts HDL (high-density lipoprotein known as the "good" cholesterol because a high level of it seems to protect against heart attack).

If you drink, choose red wine for health. It contains antioxidants (polyphenols) that can protect from damage to the brain caused by oxygen-free radicals and from strokes, as well as stimulate estrogen production.

Alcohol can trigger estrogenic response in postmenopausal women: red wine, in 92 percent of women; bourbon, 83 percent; beer/white wine, 77 percent. But did you know that the body can also get a lot of beneficial antioxidants from grape juice, minus the alcohol? Grape juice has resveratrol, a chemical in the skin of grapes that helps blood circulation and fights fungus.

What is the best slimming diet?

Jokingly, the best diet of all is to "zip your mouth." We tend to eat more than we should. Try these approaches:

Less is more—Eat less of everything at meal time. Example: If your usual is a plateful of food, cut it down to half. If you average one cup of rice per meal, make it a half cup.

Rule of five—Consume five servings of vegetables and fruits daily. If you want to lose weight, increase your intake to 10 a day. Eat the vegetables/fruits, preferably raw, before anything else so little room is left for anything else.

Moderation—Have just a little bit of everything. In short, no second servings of any kind of food except veggies and fruits.

Fasting—It isn't a diet, but a cleansing regimen.

Can you recommend a de-stress exercise I can practice daily?

Learning how to slow down can prolong your life. You can do so many things to relax and remove stress from your system. When your emotions overload your heart and your worries burden the mind, your health is bound to be affected. The connection is real and unbreakable.

ILLUSTRATION BY STEPH BRAVO

The time you realize you are stressed is the time your healing begins. Realization is the first step.

- Try to eliminate or avoid stressors from your life (i.e., obviously, you can't do anything about traffic, taxes, but you can do something about the way you look at them). The key is your response—negative or positive, violent or peaceful, hateful or loving. Choose the path of non-violence.
- Listen to relaxing music.
- Get active or physical. If you are depressed, put on your rubber shoes and hit the road. Walk your blues away.

One sure-fire approach is to get up each day and run to the bathroom mirror. Smile at yourself and say, "You are great!" By praising yourself, you are already programming your mind and emotion.

- Listen to or sing an inspirational/spiritual/praise song.
- Practice slow, deep breathing quietly for 5 minutes.
- Pray. Meditate.
- Jump 10 times to get your circulation going and your lymph moving.

What is the secret of beautiful skin?

The state of your skin is the result of many factors:

- Balanced diet rich in veggies/fruits
- Exercise—daily walking (if possible)
- Enough sleep—6-8 hours
- Avoidance of the sun (wear sunblock SPF 20-30 at all times) or sunbathing
- Happy disposition
- Supplements—daily multi-vitamins, multimineral tablet/capsule, extra dosage of Vitamin C or antioxidant regimen (A, C, E, selenium)
- Monthly cleansing at a dermatologist's clinic
- Religiously following the three-step skin care: clean, tone, moisturize.

Love and light!

(Reference: "Your Miracle Brain," by Jean Carper)

Note: Join me on beauty and wellness day, Feb. 25, 11 a.m.-4 p.m., SM Megamall, with dzMM Radyo Patrol and Smart. Call dzMM at 4152272.

Listen to "Ma Beauty Po Naman," Radyo Patrol 630, 6:15 p.m., Sunday. Watch "The Good Life," Studio 23, 10 a.m., Sunday.

TWEETIE de Leon-Gonzalez, who pursues healthy living and an active lifestyle both for her and her family, has been named endorser of the "Choose Wellness, Choose Nestlé" advocacy campaign of Nestlé Philippines.

Tweetie promotes wellness

TWEETIE DE LEON-GONZALEZ has been named the newest celebrity endorser of "Choose Wellness, Choose Nestlé."

The advocacy, first launched in March 2005 as "Let's Talk Wellness" by Nestlé Philippines, seeks to build awareness of current knowledge and lifestyle practices promoting wellness, "the state of complete physical, mental and social well-being, and not merely the absence of disease," according to the World Health Organization.

Gonzalez, mother of four kids ranging in age from 1 to 9, says ensuring her family's wellness is a very important part of her role as a wife and mother. She tries to set an example in leading an active lifestyle. Though she doesn't go to the gym as much as before, she plays squash three times a week and does fitness routines like abdominal exercises and yoga, either in the gym or at home.

Husband Mon, a businessman, plays basketball and also frequents the gym while two sons are medalists in taekwondo. The Gonzalez family also plays badminton as much as they can.

Although Gonzalez eats almost everything, she makes sure she has vegetables with every meal. She encourages her children to eat vegetables and also sees to it that they drink milk everyday.

Gonzalez says praying regularly helps her handle stress. She also goes for relaxing massages, lighting candles and listening to music, as well as simple pleasures like eating a yummy dessert.

But her biggest pleasure is being with her kids, spending as much time as possible with each one of them.

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12 wise words for 2006

LEARN SOME wise fitness words for 2006 from the first issue of Healthy Options News Digest (January-February).

The magazine offers 12 positive prescriptions for each month—revive, reward, relax, release, rewind, reflect, refill, rejoice, relish, respire, recharge and refresh.

People should try to live in the present. Being too focused on the future keeps them from living more of their lives today.

The special report, "Can You Be Fat and Healthy?," says people who eat right and work out should not be worried if they can't fit into their jeans. It's not the number on the scale or the size of the pants that they should worry about but elevated blood pressure and cholesterol.

"Ask The Experts" gives tips on how to combat the effects of aging with the right fats, foods and supplements.

In "Cancer Myths," 16 survivors reveal the biggest myths about cancer while "The Dangers of Chronic Distress" discusses the health effects of the condition.

Other features include "Holistic Dentistry," "Sacred Spaces," and "Everyone in the Pool."

The new Healthy Options News Digest is offered free to customers of Healthy Options, with branches at Shangri-La Plaza Mall, Mandaluyong; Rustan's Supermarket, Makati; Level 2 of Festival Supermall, Filinvest, Alabang; ground level of Ayala Center, Cebu City; ground floor, SM City North Edsa; Level 2 of SM Manila and SM Pampanga; Greenbelt, Ayala Center, Makati City; Level 2 of SM Megamall B, Edsa Mandaluyong City. Visit www.healthyoptions.com.ph.

MEDICard The Healthcare I Deserve!

Take Charge Doc!

What is Cardiac Dysrhythmia?

It is a group of conditions in which the muscle contractions of the heart is irregular or is faster (>100) or slower (<60) than normal. It can occur in a wide variety of circumstances in patient with no evidence of heart disease or in those with heart disease due to any cause (e.g. coronary, valvular, myopathies). The usual history of cardiac arrhythmia or dysrhythmia is of sudden onset of palpitation that the patient may describe as regular or irregular pounding on the chest. Other patients may complain not of palpitations but rather of the consequences of the dysrhythmia such as weakness, chest pains, dizziness, difficulty of breathing and confusion. Some arrhythmias are life threatening medical emergencies that can cause cardiac arrest and sudden death. Abnormal impulses can begin by one or two mechanisms. 1) Automaticity -refers to cardiac muscle cell firing off on impluse on its cell. 2) Re-entry- impluse travels in a circle within the heart, rather than moving outward then stopping. Diagnosis of cardiac dysrhythmia can be done by simple history and physical examination, ECG (EKG) and 24 hour Holter monitoring. It may also need complex diagnostic (invasive) procedure like electrophysiology or coronary angiography. In the treatment of cardiac dysrhythmia it is important to estimate the severity of the dysrhythmia (impact on the left ventricular functions, blood pressure, cerebral and cononary and renal functions)

This week's answer to our feature question was provided by our medical service provider at Angeles Medical Center, Dr. Eduardo M. Alfonso. Dr. Ed as he is commonly addressed by his patients, is specializes in IM-Cardiology and has been in the field for twenty three years now. He is graduate of Medicine from the FEU NRMF in 1976 and finished his residency training for Internal Medicine in 1983. He later obtained his subspecialty training for Cardiology at the Philippine Heart Center. Dr. Alfonso is member of the Philippine Heart Association and the Philippine Society of Hypertension. He is married and blessed with children. MEDICard members may visit him for consultation services at Angeles Medical Center Mondays thru Saturdays from 10am to 6pm.

MEDICard's Medical Director, Dr. Nicky Montoya answers questions on health through the assistance and expertise of MEDICard's network of accredited specialists. Write to Dr. Nicky or E-mail him at inquiry@medicardphils.com for your inquiries on health matters.

Nicky

IAME offers P2.8 million scholarships

The International Academy of Management and Economics (IAME - [eye-aim]), the alternative school to UP, Ateneo and La Salle has opened scholarships worth P2.8 million to high school valedictorians, salutatorians, and other honor graduates for the June 2006 opening of classes.

Non-honor graduates may qualify by scoring 85% in the entrance examination. Early bird enrollees will be given 20% discount in tuition fees.

IAME is noted for its global affiliations with foreign schools such as: Warnborough University: England; University of California Berkeley: USA; Jones International University: USA; University of Business & Finance: Switzerland; University of Southern Queensland: Australia; Australian Institute of Management and Science: Australia; University of London: U.K.; Swiss Management Academy: Switzerland; Gibaran Business School: Australia, Australia Entrepreneurship Institute, Australia Tourism Institute. ADVT

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1061 Metropolitan Avenue
Makati City 1200

IAME International Academy of Management and Economics

GOLD medalist Michael Mendoza and Armand Ocampo

JUN and Nene Leonor

MARISSE Reyes and Vilma Valera

FORMER Quezon City Mayor Mel Mathay, Jocelyn Poon, Didi Manarang, Ruby Co, Vivian Uy and Susan Laudico.

FORTUNE Ledesma, Margaret Lim Kwok, Kevin Kwok, Nini and husband Abe Licaros

KAREN Francisco, gold medalist Belinda Adora, Dr. Belen Carisma and silver medalist Emmanuel Reyes

SAVANNAH Moon party people. Madeleine Lim, Penny Lim, birthday gal Margaret Lim Kwok, PL Lim, Nene Casimiro, Nellie Bengzon and Dr. Belen Carisma

Swinging birthday bash for dancing lady

WITHOUT BATTING AN EYELASH

Maurice Arcache

Photos by Alex Van Hagen using **Kodak** EasyShare system

TALL, ELEGANT, VIVACIOUS AND fun **Margaret Lim Kwok** had a smashing, swinging birthday bash with her close pals.

It started with an excellent dinner at the consistent China Bistro, *palanggas*, *après* which Margaret L.K.'s super fun dancing group dashed over to the swinging Savannah Moon to shake off all the calories the ladies stuffed themselves with.

SEA Games gold and silver medalists in Latin American dance **Michael Mendoza** and **Belinda Adora**, and standard dance **Emmanuel Reyes** and **Maira Rosete** showed their awesome championship skills. They were followed by other fab champions like **Miguel de la Serna** and **Vangilyn Cenina**, **Armand Ocampo** and **Karen Francisco**, and **Ryan Sago** and **Isay**.

Highlight of the birthday bash was Margaret L.K.'s fantastic Jive number with her partner, Armand Ocampo, followed by her close, close pal, Dr. **Belen Carisma** and **Gifford Gavieres**.

Then, faster than you could bat an eyelash, it was time to roll and rock the dance floor, with the whole dinner bunch shaking and rolling till way past midnight.

Cool celebrator Margaret Lim Kwok definitely knows what a swinging party is all about, *palanggas*.

Mr. Charmer's bash

You just gotta hand it to Mr. Charmer himself, the well-respected Catanduanes governor, **Leandro "Lee" Verceles Jr.**, *palanggas*. When he calls, they all come as they did when he threw a super bash for his birthday at the chic, upscale Citrus Bar in Glorietta 2, Ayala Center.

The place was jam-packed with over 300 celebs and assorted hotshot well-wishers, ranging from Lee's relatives, his government and business associates, to beautiful faces in the party-going scene of Makati's clubbing strip.

Since it was the hottest ticket of the week, invitees made it a point to be there, circulating endlessly in the eye-catching smoking area outside and the chi-chi interiors of Citrus, dahlings. *Moi* couldn't believe the crowd that was there. But perhaps it was really no surprise as cellular networks, as early as a week before, were already super loaded as invitations were "texted" to just about everyone who wanted to help Lee make his special day a memorable one.

Among the invitees were stunningly gorgeous, drop-dead beauties like **Jenny Kinsella**, **Kaye Quema**, **JL Domino**, **Liz Go**, **Cecille Castro**, **Yulia Shestakova**, **Yra Cruz**, **Jen Rosendahl** , **Tisha Silang**, **Kat Steen** and brilliant **Pinky Amador**, who had all the guys going gaga. *Naturellement*, a couple of mega businessmen tried but hit a blank wall when they tried to attract some of the gals mentioned above. Pity!

With booze pouring till way past 2 a.m., *palanggas*, beautiful women, hotshot businessmen and politicians, plus the chic pack of partying night owls, made the bash of the cool celebrator Gov. Leandro Verceles Jr. a smashing success.

Launching

The Ayala group started it all, *palanggas*, now the SM Group has just launched the first-ever awesome Imax theater at the grand Shangri-La Rizal ballroom.

Located at SM's flagship Mall of Asia, the *tres* comfy 630-seater cinema boasts of a colossal movie screen, as tall as an eight-story building, and is, take note, *palanggas*, the largest in Asia and one of the largest in the world.

SM promises that we, movie freaks, will see films like we've never seen them before. Imax is "a Canadian-based technology that utilizes film (dig this) 10 times larger than conventional film, delivers the most crisp and life-like images ever seen, with a digital surround system that enhances cinematic sound to levels never before heard," excitedly explained to *moi* by young PR whiz GP Reyes.

I am told blockbuster movies and educational documentaries have already been converted into Imax's awesome format, *palanggas*.

We were welcomed by the brilliant, low-profile Sy tandem, super charmer **Hans Sy** and his sister, incredibly intelligent **Tessie Sy-Coson** from SM Prime Holdings, together with **Don Savant** and **Jim Patterson** of Imax Corp., as we breezed in. After a yummy dinner and straight-to-the-point speeches from Don Savant and Hans Sy, we were treated to a spectacular live action presentation showing us Imax's super stunning capabilities.

As we left, everyone agreed, dahlings, that we can't wait to enjoy the exhilarating, wow Imax experience.

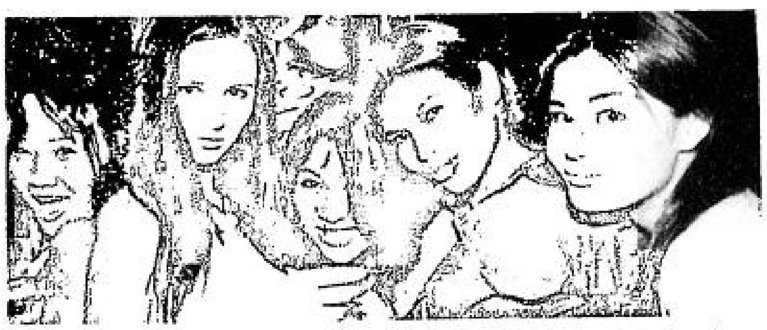
ARMFUL OF BEAUTIES. Jenny Kinsella, Kaye Quema, lucky Lord Ancheta, Farah Helena and Marina Marree

CECILLE Castro and Yra Cruz

KATHY Moya and Sally Varias Tsai

WE PARTY, TOO. Former Catanduanes Vice Gov. Teofisto Verceles and handsome Sen. Bong Revilla

DINGDONG Dantes and Mayor Ding Guerrero


EYE-CATCHERS. Young Won, Yulia Shestakova, JL Domino, Carol and Mai de Gorostiza

CRAIG Tuazon, Antoine Rouvroy, Kelly Kampen, birthday boy Lee V. and Pinky Amador

THE FABULOUS Bloomfields band, definitely a Beatles' reincarnation, had us rocking the dance floor.

HIP group: Justin Garcia, June Estrella, Century Tuna's Leo Po, PR whiz GP Reyes, Celina Matias and Karl Ty

HOT SHOTS. Imax's VP for Asia-Pacific Don Savant and Jim Patterson, with SM's Hans Sy and Ric Camaligan

BEAUTIES AND CELEBRATOR. Jana Kamenikova, Gov. Lee Verceles, Mark Powers (second from right), JL Domino Juliana and Liz Go

CHILLING at Citrus. Former Board Member Jun Popa, Mayor Bong Teves, PNP provincial director Francis Peñaflor, Makati police chief Marieto Valerio

CHRIS Peterson, Louie Ysmael of the hot Citrus Bar, Tisha Silang and Geoff Rodriguez

KAT Steen

LAWYERS John Socito and Pio Rodolfo III

MARGIT Lind